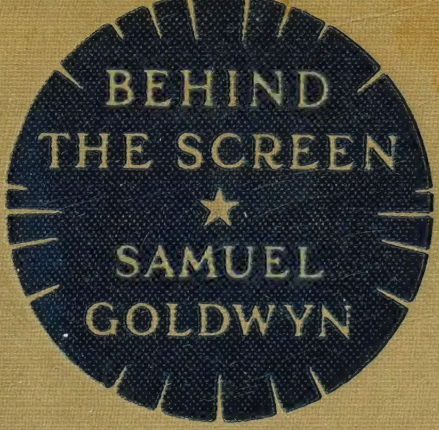
BEHIND
THE SCREEN
SAMUEL
GOLDWYN

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SAMUEL GOLDWYN

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MR. AND MRS. DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS

Internationally beloved and known to millions the world over.

BEHIND THE SCREEN

BY

SAMUEL GOLDWYN

NEW YORK
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BEHIND THE SCREEN. I

TO THE MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY
WHICH HAS BROUGHT ME SOME SUCCESS, A WORLD
OF GOOD FRIENDS AND PLEASANT ASSOCIATES,
AND, ABOVE ALL, THE SUPREME SATISFACTION OF
DOING THAT WHICH I LOVE BEST TO DO, THIS
BOOK IS DEDICATED. IN GRATEFUL APPRECIA-
TION, I LIKEWISE DEDICATE TO THAT INDUSTRY
MY SINCEREST EFFORTS FOR THE FUTURE.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I want to acknowledge the co-operation of Miss Corinne Lowe in the preparation of these articles. But for her enthusiasm, her patience, and her splendid co-operation given me in every way, this series could never have been written.

S. G.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
One:	IN WHICH IS FILMED THE BIRTH OF A NOTION	15
Two:	RECORDS THE SUCCESS OF AN IDEA	23
Three:	MARY PICKFORD	30
Four:	FASCINATING FANNY WARD	50
Five:	MARGUERITE CLARK MISSES FIRE AND EDNA GOODRICH DOESN'T IGNITE AT ALL	60
Six:	THE MISCHIEVOUSNESS OF MAE MURRAY	73
Seven:	GERALDINE THE GREAT	81
Eight:	THE DISCOVERY OF CHARLIE CHAPLIN	97
Nine:	STARS, STARS, STARS!	108
Ten:	THE MAGIC OF MARY GARDEN	127
Eleven:	MAXINE ELLIOTT AND PAULINE FREDERICK	137
Twelve:	A MARRIAGE OF TWO MINDS	149
Thirteen:	THE REAL CHAPLIN	158
Fourteen:	JACKIE COOGAN AND "THE KID"	169
Fifteen:	DOUG AND MARY	179
Sixteen:	RODOLPH VALENTINO	186
Seventeen:	ROMANTIC TRUE STORIES OF SOME SCREEN FAVORITES	196
Eighteen:	POLA NEGRI	212
Nineteen:	THE TWO TALMADGES	219
Twenty:	GOOD OLD WILL ROGERS	229
Twenty-One:	SOME AUTHORS WHO HAVE TRAVELLED TO HOLLYWOOD	235

ILLUSTRATIONS

Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Fairbanks . . . . *Frontispiece*

PAGE

Elsie Ferguson 16

Mr. Goldwyn, Mabel Normand and Charlie Chaplin 17

Alice Terry 32

Bert Lytell 33

Mr. Goldwyn, Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford 48

Barbara La Marr 49

Clara Kimball Young 64

Mr. Goldwyn Acting as Host and Waiter . . . 65

Lou Tellegen and Geraldine Farrar 88

Theda Bara 89

Mabel Normand 112

Maxine Elliott 113

Mary Garden and Geraldine Farrar 128

Will Rogers Bids Pauline Frederick Goodbye . . 129

Charlie Chaplin 160

Rupert Hughes 161

Jackie Coogan 176

George Fitzmaurice 177

Rodolph Valentino 192

PAGE

MAURICE MAETERLINCK 193

ERIC VON STROHEIM 208

"CHARLIE," "DOUG" AND "MARY" 209

CONSTANCE TALMADGE 224

NORMA TALMADGE 225

SAMUEL GOLDWYN AND SEVEN FAMOUS AUTHORS HE WON TO THE SCREEN 240

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS 241

BEHIND THE SCREEN

BEHIND THE SCREEN

Chapter One

IN WHICH IS FILMED THE BIRTH OF A NOTION

IT WAS something more than nine years ago that I walked into a little motion-picture theatre on Broadway. I paid ten cents admission. As I took my seat a player-piano was digging viciously into a waltz. Upon the floor a squalid statuette lay under its rain of peanut-shells.

And all around me men, women, and children were divided between the sustained comfort of chewing-gum and the sharp, fleeting rapture of the nut.

Only a decade ago! Yet this was a representative setting and audience for motion-pictures. Likewise typical was the film itself. For, as were practically all productions of that day, this was only one or two reels. And, faithful to the prevailing tradition, the drama of to-night was Western.

I looked at the cowboys galloping over the Western plains, and in their place there rose before me Henry Esmond crossing swords with the Young

Pretender, wiry young D'Artagnan riding out from Gascony on his pony to the Paris of Richelieu, Carmen on her way to the bull-fight where Don Jose waited to stab her.

Why not? Here was the most wonderful medium of expression in the world. Through it every great novel, every great drama, might be uttered in the one language that needs no translation. Why get nothing from this medium save situations which were just about as fresh and unexpected as the multiplication tables?

When I went into that theatre I had no idea of ever going into the film business. When I went out I was glowing with the sudden realisation of my way to fortune. I could hardly wait until I told my idea to my brother-in-law, Jesse Lasky.

"Lasky, do you want to make a fortune?" With these words I burst in upon him that evening.

Lasky, who was at that time in the vaudeville business, indicated that he had no morbid dread of the responsibility of great wealth.

"Very well, then," I continued. "Put up some money."

"In what?"

"In motion-pictures," I answered.

"Motion-pictures!" scoffed he. "You and I would be a fine pair in that business—me, a vaudeville man, and you, a glove salesman! What do we

ELSIE FERGUSON

Dignified stage star who lost none of her lustre on the screen.

MR. GOLDWYN, MABEL NORMAND AND CHARLIE CHAPLIN

know about the game? Besides, how about the trust?"

His last words touched upon a vital issue in the screen industry of that period. The truth of it was that motion-picture theatres throughout the country were practically at the mercy of ten companies which, for the privilege of showing pictures, collected a weekly license fee of two dollars each, from fifteen thousand theatres. I shall not enter here into the argument by which the combine justified their taxation. I shall merely remark that the existent system presented an obstacle worthy of consideration. However, all the way home I had been preparing an answer to this protest of Lasky's, and now I eagerly put it forth.

"Give the public fine pictures," I urged. "Show them something different from Western stuff and slap-stick comedies and you'll find out what will become of the trust. And why should your entertainment have to be so short? If it's a good story there's no reason why it couldn't run through five reels. I tell you the possibilities of the motion-picture business have never been touched. We could sell good films and long films all over the world."

Eventually Lasky was convinced that my idea presented at least a good betting proposition, and he agreed to add ten thousand dollars to the equal

amount which I put up, provided he be relieved of any active management. Considering that in those days many of the two-reelers were made for less than a thousand dollars, our original capital seemed not only adequate to the immediate cost of production, but to a handsome margin for recovery from a possible first failure. With this assumption of strength we took our next logical step. We hunted for somebody who would make our pictures for us.

It was natural that the first person of whom we should think in this connection was Mr. D. W. Griffith. He was then directing for the Biograph Company, one of the units of the motion-picture trust, and he had already experimented with the longer picture in "Judith of Bethulia." Indeed, I wish to say right here that I lay no claim to pioneer thought in realising that the screen was susceptible of longer and more varied treatment, for, in addition to our American "Judith of Bethulia," one or two foreign pictures had heralded the new era. Any possible credit to me, therefore, must be accorded to my conception of the new sort of photoplay as a systematic performance rather than as a sporadic spectacle. Indeed, I was to find out later that even this idea was not an exclusive visitation. Lasky and I had supposed that we were the only ones in the field, but it was not long before we dis-

covered that even previous to us another man had acted on the same idea.

But to go back to my interview with Mr. Griffith. I met him for lunch, and I was impressed immediately by the personality which has since lifted him into his place as the greatest of screen directors. Tall and spare and quite stooped, Mr. Griffith's figure suggests by its very lack of erectness that reserve of energy which transforms him in the studio to the tireless, almost demoniacal worker. His features are clear-cut, and to the suggestion of the eagle in his profile the clear blue eyes—eyes which you could never possibly mistake for gray even across a room—contribute a final authority. These eyes while he is at work, so people tell me, glow with enthusiasm, but during the chance interview they join with the mouth in a look of amused observation.

With this expression he heard me make my proposition that day. When he finally spoke it was to quench any hope that Mr. Griffith might ever become associated with Lasky and me.

"A very interesting project," he commented, "and if you can show me a bank deposit of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars I think we might talk."

I did not betray the meagre conversational basis which I had to offer. Instead, Lasky and I now

approached a friend of ours, Cecil de Mille. Mr. de Mille, although very little more than thirty years of age at this time, was already known as a playwright of considerable skill. His father had been Belasco's partner and he himself had been associated with the celebrated theatrical producer in writing "The Return of Peter Grimm." With all of his dramatic tradition and achievement Mr. de Mille had one limitation. At this time he had never directed a picture. More than this, he had never even seen one directed.

However, neither he nor we were daunted by this slight flaw in his equipment. And after a day or two spent in the Edison studios Mr. de Mille went out to California to "shoot" our first picture. For his services he was paid one hundred dollars a week and was promised, in addition, some stock in the company. When you reflect that to-day he receives approximately five thousand dollars a week, together with a large percentage of the returns on every production, it helps you to realise that the jinnee of the screen has functioned almost as well as did his ancestor of the "Arabian Nights."

And in no place is the magic more apparent than in California. When De Mille went out to Los Angeles to look around for a site, Hollywood promised nothing of its present pomp. The vast studios, the beautiful villas, the famous pleasure-

places—all have arisen in the past decade. It needs, indeed, only a flash-back from the Famous Players-Lasky studios of to-day to our humble residence of nine years ago to give you a complete sense of the growth of the industry.

The site which we finally selected was one floor of a livery-stable. Here in this space, out of which had been created, in addition to the studio, five small dressing-rooms, our director made that first film. The elaborate sets were then undreamed of. Painted backgrounds achieved their duties, and our scenic equipment consisted of four canvas wings and two pieces of canvas. Likewise absent was the modern complicated system of lighting. The sun was our only electrician in those days. And with the aid of three or four men De Mille set to work in a studio where the weekly pay-roll now numbers eleven hundred and fifty people.

Yet, in spite of such simplified conditions, it cost us forty-seven thousand dollars to make that first picture. Nowadays that sum is inadequate for any long production, but in those times it was unprecedented. Of course the cost of the motion-picture rights of our first drama accounted for this expenditure. This drama was "The Squaw Man," recently revived by Mr. William Faversham, and for it we guaranteed royalty rights of ten thousand

dollars. Ten thousand, and our capital was only ten thousand more!

On the twenty-ninth of December, 1913, De Mille began making the picture. But before he had even touched it I had got enough orders on that unmaterialized merchandise to insure the production of the second picture. I represented the executive end of our enterprise, and my first move had been to make newspaper announcement of the fact that the Lasky Company, as we had decided to call our organisation, was going to produce a yearly series of twelve five-reel pictures, beginning with "The Squaw Man."

In New York I awaited results. Which would prevail—the trust or the new kind of picture?

I was not kept long in suspense. Almost immediately theatre managers and letters from theatre managers began to pour in. These functionaries had been partially paralysed by the trust, and their quick response to our announcement indicated just how eager they were for an opportunity to regain their prestige. Although I had, of course, counted upon such reaction, the swiftness and volume of those first orders overwhelmed me with incredulous joy.

Chapter Two

RECORDS THE SUCCESS OF AN IDEA

I *AM* compelled to say right here that life had not led me to expect any such facility. For I had been a poor boy—poor and often homeless. Of formal schooling I had practically none. At the age when most boys take arithmetic and a roof and three square meals as a matter of course I was fending for myself. When I got these things it was through odd jobs in blacksmith-shops and in glove-factories. Sometimes, of course, I did not get them at all. For example, I remember how once as a boy of twelve I wandered for a whole week through the streets of London with no more ardent guaranty of the future than a loaf of bread.

My early boyhood was spent in Europe and I was just fourteen when, absolutely alone and with no friend or relative to greet me, I arrived in New York City. From the city I went to Gloversville, N. Y., and there, after about four or five years spent in a glove-factory, I succeeded in persuading a firm that I could sell gloves. I can say without arrogance of heart that I did sell them. But there

was no miracle of ease about this process. I travelled from coast to coast; I often worked eighteen hours a day; I put over my product in districts where it never sold before. As a result of all this I was making about fifteen thousand dollars a year at the time when I chanced in upon that little motion-picture theatre. I also owned stock in my company and, thanks to an expanded income, I had been able to supplement my fragmentary schooling by many lectures and concerts and by frequent trips to Europe.

But, although at thirty I was a comparatively successful man, I was not satisfied. I never had been satisfied. I can remember how when a boy in the cutting department I used to walk by the leading hotel in Gloversville and look at the "drummers" who cocked their feet up in the big plate-glass window. How I envied them—those splendid adventurers with their hats and their massive cigars both at an angle! For to me they represented the everlasting romance of the far horizon. And when at last I myself was admitted to this peerage I was sensible, of course, of another, greater goal. I have made many mistakes in my life, but I can honestly say that they were all results of an unceasing effort on my part to reach the bigger thing just beyond.

But to return to my story. It soon became ap-

parent that we needed more money for the production of "The Squaw Man." How were we going to raise that necessary twenty-five thousand dollars? Our first approach to the problem was a personal one. Lasky and I asked any number of people we knew if they didn't want some stock in the Lasky Company. But all of them were skeptical. At last, however, we were able to borrow the needed funds out of bank. De Mille resumed work on the picture, and a few weeks afterward he returned to New York with the precious merchandise. Meanwhile he had wired us that there was something wrong with the film, but even this did not prepare me for my first glimpse of the production upon which I had staked everything.

Buzz! In the silence of that deserted studio we heard the machine begin its work. And then, as from a very far shore, I heard Lasky's voice.

"We're ruined," he cried.

He was saying only what I myself had been too sick with horror to exclaim. For, like a mad dervish, the home of the noble English earl, together with all the titled ladies who moved therein, had jumped across the screen. Time refused to stabilise them. They went right on jumping. And with gathering despair we looked on what we supposed to be the wreck of forty-seven thousand dollars.

That it was not a wreck was due to the aid of some one from whom we had no right to expect it. At that time the late Sigismund Lubin of Philadelphia was head of one of the ten companies which we were fighting. Nevertheless it was to him I appealed for expert advice. I took the roll of film over to Philadelphia, and with a largeness of spirit which I shall never forget the old gentleman saved me, his threatened rival, from utter ruin. He pointed out that the time-stop was wrong. No, not an irremediable defect. In the joy of this discovery I overlooked the hardship of his cure. Yet this was to paste by hand new perforations on both edges of a film that was nearly a mile long.

The story of the beginning of the Lasky Company is now coming to a close. To it I might add a thousand picturesque and amusing details, but I realise that the chief interest of my reminiscences is focussed, not upon the development of the motion-picture industry—dramatic as that undoubtedly is—but upon the celebrated personalities with whom my life has brought me into contact. I have delayed this long the more vital communications because the transition from the former impoverished photoplays to the elaborate spectacle of to-day involved many producers and brought with it the rise of all our famous stars. To give a real insight into the lives of Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin,

Norma Talmadge, Douglas Fairbanks, Wallace Reid, Harold Lloyd, Mabel Normand, and other famous screen artists obligates, in fact, the background of photoplay history involved in the start of the Lasky Company.

My last word here touches upon the reception of "The Squaw Man." It scored an immediate success. Our second play established us even more firmly. This prosperity resulted logically in helping the overthrow of the trust. Beaten upon by the wave of new photoplay methods, some of its units were carried out to oblivion. Others rose to the surface only through conformity to the agent of destruction.

It was during an interview with one of the first exhibitors who came to my office that I heard the name of the man who, unknown to me, had already embarked on the very same enterprise that I had.

"So you've got this idea of the long film too?" remarked this exhibitor.

If one of the Indians who greeted Columbus had said, "So you've landed too?" the explorer would have felt probably as I did at that moment.

"What do you mean?" I asked him.

"Why," said he, "haven't you heard about the man that brought over Sarah Bernhardt's first picture and produced 'The Prisoner of Zenda'—a fellow by the name of Zukor?"

It was not until some months after this that I first met Mr. Adolph Zukor, then head of the Famous Players Company. I should like to have more space to devote to the eminent producer who, through years of alternating competition and co-operation, has touched my life at so many points, but I can pause only long enough for a few words. Mr. Zukor, like myself, started in the world as a poor boy. Unlike me, however, he started film-production with a background of experience. He had owned for some years a number of motion-picture theatres, and a more intimate dissatisfaction with available resources was back of his break from tradition. When he attempted to get financial backing for his project, however, he met with the same objections which I had heard, and he has often told me how the theatrical manager whose aid he attempted to enlist scoffed, "What do you want to show a long film for? People are not going to have the patience to sit through more than a thousand feet of film."

I might marshal a great many adjectives and nouns to Mr. Zukor's credit, but I feel that I can suggest his fundamental character more skilfully by recalling one incident. Several years after I had met him we were coming home from some entertainment together when we saw a blaze in the locality of the Famous Players' studio which, un-

like our own, was situated in New York. We were soon to discover that it was the studio itself. In it were thousands of dollars' worth of undeveloped negatives—many of them of Mary Pickford. Their destruction would have meant financial ruin to Mr. Zukor. He himself realised this fully. Yet the only words that he said, the words which he kept repeating all through the crisis, were, "Oh, do you think anybody's hurt?"

Chapter Three

MARY PICKFORD

IT was some months after I first met our competitor that I received my first impression of the most noted screen actress in America. As I walked into Mr. Zukor's office one evening I noticed a girl talking to him. She was very small and her simple little navy suit contrasted with the jungle of fur coat from which peeped another woman.

"They've offered me five hundred for the use of my name," I heard her say, "but do you really think that's enough? After all, it means a lot to those cold-cream people."

I looked at the lovely profile where every feature rhymes with every other feature. I listened to the lovely light voice. And I was struck by the disparity between sentiment and equipment.

Yet somehow she did invest these words of mere commerce with a quality quite apart from their substance. There was something in her tone, something in the big brown eyes, which made you think of a child asking whether it ought to give up its

stick of candy for one marble or whether perhaps it could get two. As I saw her slight figure go out the door it was the appeal of her manner rather than the text of her question which made me ask immediately who she was.

"What!" Mr. Zukor exclaimed. "Didn't you recognise her? Why, that was Mary Pickford."

That was just about eight years ago. Miss Pickford was already a star, and she was twinkling under the auspices of Adolph Zukor; for, early in his career of producing, our competitor had been fortunate enough to secure the services of that great pantomime artiste who has undoubtedly contributed more than any other single person to his present eminence.

Mr. Zukor made Miss Pickford a star. This is a mere formal statement of the case. In reality she made herself, for no firmament could have long resisted any one possessing such standards of workmanship. I am aware that here I sound suspiciously like the press-agent, who invariably endows his client with "a passionate devotion to her work." It is unfortunate, indeed, that the zeal of this functionary has calloused public consciousness to instances where the statement is based on fact. All screen stars are not animated by devotion to work. Mary Pickford is. To it she has sacrificed pleas-

ures, personal contacts, all sorts of extraneous interests.

Several years before I walked into the theatre which inspired me with my idea, Mary Pickford was working under Mr. Griffith in the Biograph Company, which, you will remember, was a unit in the trust. Then she was not a star. She was getting twenty-five dollars a week, and the most vivid reflection of those early days of hers is afforded by a woman who used to work with her.

"How well I remember her," this woman has told me, "as she sat there in the shabby old Biograph offices. She nearly always wore a plain little blue dress with a second-hand piece of fur about her throat."

Not long ago I asked Mr. Griffith this question: "Did you have any idea in those days that Mary Pickford was destined for such a colossal success?" His answer was a decided negative.

"You understand, of course," he immediately qualified, "my mind was always on the story—not on the star. However, I can say this: It was due to me that Miss Pickford was retained at all, for the management did not care for her especially. To speak plainly, they thought she was too chubby."

I gasped at the impiety of the word. It was some time before I could rally to ask him another

ALICE TERRY

Wife of Rex Ingram, noted director whose work in "The Four Horsemen" compelled unusual attention.

BERT LYTELL

Who brought great stage tradition to the screen.

question: "Then was there anything that set her apart from other girls you were engaging at that time?"

"Work," he retorted promptly. "I soon began to notice that instead of running off as soon as her set was over, she'd stay to watch the others on theirs. She never stopped listening and looking. She was determined to learn everything she could about the business."

While considering these remarks of the greatest screen director anent the greatest screen actress, it is interesting to parallel them with Miss Pickford's comments upon Mr. Griffith. One evening not long ago I was entertained at the Fairbanks home at a dinner including Charlie Chaplin and Mr. Griffith. After the meal was served Doug took Mr. Griffith out to see his swimming-pool. Mary and I were left alone, and as we looked after the tall, bent figure of the director, I took advantage of our solitude to ask her a question which had often occurred to me. "Mary," I asked her, "how did you ever come to break away from Griffith?"

"Well," she answered promptly, "it was this way: I felt that I was getting to be a machine under Mr. Griffith. I got to be like an automatic doll. If he told me to move my left foot I moved it. When he said, 'Look up' I did that just as un-

questioningly. So I make up my mind to see if I could really do anything by myself."

I doubt if Mr. Zukor himself realised at first the tremendous potentiality of Mary Pickford. It was some months, indeed, before the Famous Players starred her, and Mr. Zukor has often told me how during that probationary time she used to say to him, "Oh, Mr. Zukor, if I could only see my name in electric lights I'd be the happiest girl in the world!"

When the great moment to which she had so long and so eagerly looked forward finally did come, the scenario-writer of Mary Pickford's own life displayed a dramatic deftness of touch.

One day Mr. Zukor asked Miss Pickford if she would go out to dinner with him that evening. She agreed, and he appointed the Hotel Breslin on Broadway for their meeting. When they sat down at their table it was still light. At last when dusk began to fall Mr. Zukor rose and went over to the window.

"Come over here," he called to the girl. "I want you to see something."

Wonderingly she followed him. She looked out at the street where the swift Winter darkness was dimming the familiar outlines, and then she looked back to his face.

"What is it?" said she. "I don't see anything."

"Wait," he commanded.

As he spoke the lights of many windows began to brush like golden flakes against the blurred buildings. And then across the street at Proctor's there suddenly leaped in letters of frosty fire these words:

MARY PICKFORD
in
"Hearts Adrift"

She had never suspected that she was to be starred in this play. And it is not surprising that at the revelation of her success she burst into tears such as have moved her audiences all over the world.

"Can it really, really be true?"—this might have been the subtitle of that big scene in the drama of Mary Pickford's life.

It was a moment after this first shock of incredulous joy that she said to Mr. Zukor, "Oh, what will mother say when she hears this?"

Any one who knows Mary will not be surprised at this almost instantaneous thought of her mother. I have met the average number of daughters in my life and I can truthfully say that none of them ever gave a mother such devotion as does she. Until the time Mary married Douglas Fairbanks Mrs.

Pickford was the one dominating influence in her daughter's life. In the vividness of this relationship you will find perhaps the reason for one outstanding lack in Mary Pickford's life. There are many women who admire her. Of men pals, such as Marshall Neilan, the celebrated director, she has a score. But to my knowledge there is only one woman who has approached—and she very tentatively—the position of intimate friend.

"Ma" Pickford, as she is known familiarly, is now her daughter's business manager. But in the old shabby days of the Biograph studio her activities, although more limited, were equally pronounced. Every single day she came with Mary to the studio and stayed with her until she left. She watched every move she made. She gave her suggestions about her work. She sat with the faithful make-up box while Mary was on a set. In the Famous Players' studio it was the same. Of course, stage and screen supply numerous other instances of brooding maternal solicitude.

I am now approaching a phase of the noted pantomimist's career which points to many adventures in which I myself have been involved. When Mary Pickford first went with Mr. Zukor he paid her five hundred dollars a week. Her success was so marked that before her contract had expired he

voluntarily raised this to a thousand dollars. After this—but I am anticipating.

Whenever I saw Mr. Zukor looking homeless as a small-town man in house-cleaning time I knew what was the matter.

"How much does she want now?" I used to ask him laughingly.

"We're fixing up the contract," he would answer with a significant lift of the eyebrows.

It often took longer to make one of Mary's contracts than it did to make one of Mary's pictures. Yet, strangely enough, the beneficiary herself took no hand in the enterprise. The warfare of clauses was waged entirely by her mother and her lawyer. Indeed, Mr. Zukor has often told me that Mary Pickford had never asked him for a cent.

"Then how do you know she's discontented?" I once inquired of him. "How does she act?"

"Like a perfect lady," responded Mr. Zukor stoically.

I made no comment, but I have always understood that one of the advantages of being a perfect lady is that you can create a certain atmosphere without creating the basis for any definite accusations.

During the time that this contract was being negotiated the newspapers published an item to the effect that Charlie Chaplin had just signed a new

contract whereby he was to receive $670,000 a year. Right here was where Mr. Zukor experienced a most acute manifestation of his periodic disorder.

When the Chaplin contract was announced every film-producer knew that Mary Pickford was negotiating a new contract, and I know of one specific offer she received at fifteen thousand dollars a week.

On account of the pleasant relations that had always existed between Mary Pickford and Mr. Zukor, however, she finally accepted the new contract with him, in which Lasky and I joined with Mr. Zukor, as the contract for ten thousand dollars a week, to apply on fifty per cent. of the profits of the picture, seemed unusually large.

During this period of dissatisfaction she spoke to me one day about the Chaplin contract. "Just think of it," said she, "there he is getting all that money and here I am, after all my hard work, not making one half that much."

This reminds me that, some time after the contract was made, Mary Pickford started working on her first picture, entitled "Less Than Dust," and I saw more of her than I ever did before. As the enterprise was so large we decided to have a separate unit for her, which meant a separate studio that no one else worked in but Miss Pickford. As there was trouble one day, and Mr. Zukor being

away, I went over to see her. Until that time any difficulties were always straightened out with Mr. Zukor. While I was there she make this remark to me: "What do you think? They all seem to be excited around here over my getting this money. As a matter of fact, one of your officials said: 'Watch her *walk* through this set. For ten thousand dollars a week she ought to be running.' "

But to recur to the Chaplin contract: I was struck by the appeal in these words about dollars and cents. Again she seemed to me like a child, and this time all a child's sense of injustice at what she considered an ungenerous return for her services spoke in the big brown eyes. If, indeed, my last paragraphs have cast the great screen artiste in any doubtful light, I hasten to remind you that all her tremendous professional pride was at stake in securing a concrete reward. Certainly there can be no doubt—and I am sure Mr. Zukor would be the first to admit this—that she was worth all the money she ever received. In fact, there are many who will consider this a very conservative statement.

Then, too, it will be remembered that my early impressions of Mary Pickford were received from Mr. Zukor and that, although he has always had the highest admiration for her both as a woman and as an artiste, his interpretation of various episodes

was doubtless affected by the strain of financial adjustment. One memory of mine serves to establish this point.

On a certain day when I met our rival producer for lunch he was wearing what I had come to know as his "Mary" expression.

"What's up now?" I asked him.

He shook his head. "She's very balky over 'Madame Butterfly,' " he responded. "This morning she stopped acting because she said the shoes weren't right. In fact, nothing's right about the whole play."

Mr. Zukor attributed this mood to another crisis in wage fixation, but I am quite sure that salary was, at the most, only a partial factor in her dissatisfaction with that particular play. For not long ago she confided to a friend of mine: "The only quarrel I can ever remember having with a director was over 'Madame Butterfly.' It ought to have been called 'Madame Snail.' It had no movement in it, no contrasts at all. Now, my idea was to have the first scenes showing *Pinkerton* teaching the Japanese girl some American game like baseball. But would the director listen to me? Not a bit of it."

Continuing with this same reminiscence, Mary Pickford spoke of her friend Marshall Neilan. "Micky was playing with me in 'Madame Butter-

fly,'" she said. "And how well I remember the way we'd grouch after we left the studio. We used to leave work in an old car that we called Cactus Kate or Tuna Lil, and as we bumped into New York we'd invent together all sorts of business that we thought might tone up poor 'Madame Butterfly.' I was so impressed by Micky's idea that I went to Mr. Zukor and said: 'Do you know you ought to make Micky Neilan a director? He'd be worth at least a hundred and twenty-five dollars a week to you.'"

I quote this last as a testimony to the almost unerring acumen which Mary Pickford displays in her profession. Later on I myself engaged Marshall Neilan for the Lasky Company, and he has developed into one of the four or five great directors in the country. Incidentally I may mention that the Goldwyn Company now pays him twenty-five thousand dollars a picture, together with fifty per cent. of the profits. He produces four pictures a year.

My first long talk with Mary Pickford was almost a year after I caught my first glimpse of her in Zukor's office. The conversation centred almost entirely upon work, and I shall never forget my amazement as I listened to her. There was no detail of film-production which she, this girl, still in her early twenties, had not grasped more thorough-

ly than any man to whom I ever talked. She knew pictures, not only from the standpoint of the studio, but from that of the box-office. Back of those lovely brown eyes, disguised by that lyric profile, is the mind of a captain of industry. In appearance so typically feminine, Mary Pickford gives to the romance of business all of a man's response. Certainly she would have had no trouble in filling a diplomatic post. I realised this as, sitting with her one evening in the Knickerbocker Hotel restaurant, where I had taken her to dinner, I heard her speak for the first time of the Lasky studio. She was only twenty-two.

"I can't tell you," said she, "how I admire your photography." And then she went on to laud other features until I tingled with pride to think that I belonged to such a superior organisation.

"It must be a wonderful pleasure to work in such a studio," she concluded in a voice soft as the southern wind.

Of course I may be mistaken, but it seemed to me that Mary was conveying the impression that she would not be awfully offended if I made her an offer from the Lasky Company. However, as this impression was created after she had praised Zukor in the highest possible terms—indeed, she always spoke well of him—it avoided all the disadvantages of a direct statement.

I may mention incidentally that she did have offers from many producers. Therefore when she was ready to make a new contract with Zukor she had a very firm foundation of argument. "So-and-so's willing to give me so much. Also So-and-so" —this was the lever applied by her mother and her lawyer.

There was another revelation made by that first evening. She and her mother were living at the time in a little apartment on One Hundred and Fifth Street. When I entered it I was never more surprised in my life, for the room into which I was ushered contained only a few plain pieces of furniture, and in its centre stood an inexpensive-looking trunk.

As I waited for Miss Pickford I wondered to myself, "What in the world is this girl doing with her thousand a week?"

For you must remember this was no transient abode. Here in these quarters, where Japanese ideas of elimination had been applied so thoroughly, the famous star had been living for months. As I thus speculated upon the destiny of Mary's dollars the door opened and I looked up to see a short, rather stout figure and a face where could be traced some resemblance to that of the celebrity for whom I waited. It was Mrs. Pickford.

She greeted me cordially and then she turned to

the trunk. From it I saw her take the gown her daughter was going to wear that evening, and I could not help observing the simplicity of this garment. Many a girl who makes fifty dollars a week would have considered it too plain for herself.

On another occasion when Mrs. Pickford accompanied us to dinner I heard the answer to my unspoken query in the meagre little room. She was investing Mary's savings. Most of these investments were made in Canada, where Mary was born and brought up, and I was surprised to learn the extent they had already attained.

I have spoken of the famous star as being, in reality, a captain of industry. In the thrift to which I was introduced this first evening you find a reinforcement of the statement. I was soon to discover that waste of any kind offends Mary Pickford as much as it does John D. Rockefeller.

But if Mary is controlled in her general expenditure, if she has never been able to rebound from the fear of poverty impressed upon her by the straitened days of her childhood and early youth, she displays no similar restraint in one particular instance. Her family! Not only to her mother, but to her brother Jack and her sister Lottie she has been the soul of generosity.

In manner she is perfectly simple and unaffected. Unlike many other screen actresses whom

I have known, she does not act after working hours. And when she is in the studio she is always courteous and considerate. There on the set, where the soul-meter registers so true, Mary Pickford never indulges in the spasms of ego which the afflicted themselves are wont to call their temperament. Methodically as if she were Mary Jones arriving in the office for dictation, she appears on the Fairbanks lot.

There is absolutely no swank about her. An illustration of the quality which has so endeared her to many other members of her profession is found in a benefit performance given last year at Hollywood. Space was limited and when the dressing rooms were assigned no such poignant cry of outraged property rights has been uttered since the little bear whimpered, "Who's been sitting in my chair?"

"What!" cried one of the motion-picture duchesses only just recently elevated to the peerage. "Do you mean to say that I have to dress in a room with three other people?"

Miss Pickford, however, whose audiences number twenty-five to this other star's one, sat down good-humoredly in a room with several other performers.

"How jolly!" said she, according to report.

"This reminds me of the old days at the Biograph when I was getting twenty-five a week."

If Miss Pickford has, indeed, any vanity, it is focussed more upon her sense of being a good business woman than it is upon her ability as an actress. All of her friends realise this, and Charlie Chaplin, upon whose warm personal friendship with Douglas Fairbanks and his wife I shall dwell in a later chapter, is very fond of teasing her upon this one vulnerable point.

"Where do you get this idea that you're such a fine business woman, Mary," Charlie asked her laughingly one evening.

"Why, I am," she retorted indignantly. "Everybody knows it."

"I can't see it," announced Charlie. "You have something the public wants and you get the market price for it.

"And then," recounts Charlie gleefully, "I wish you had seen Doug. He looked as if he were going to hit me."

A year or so ago I was at one of the big hotels in Hollywood with an author making his first visit to the place. He looked around at the dining-room with the faces of so many famous motion-picture folks, and then he turned to me.

"I don't see Mary and Doug," he remarked. "Where are they?"

"No," said I, "and if you live in Hollywood for a year you'll probably never see them—unless you go to their home."

Poor chap! If he had gone to Switzerland and been told that the Alps never came out he could not have looked more disappointed.

One evening I was invited to dinner at the beautiful home of Mary and Doug in Beverly Hills. The idol of the screen, arrayed in a beautiful evening gown, met me with a manuscript in her hand.

"Well, well, what are you doing?" I asked her.

"Oh," she said, "I'm working on my story."

We ate a dinner where the talk was all dedicated to pictures. Then as soon as it was over Mary turned to me. "I'd like you to see my new picture this evening," she announced. "I'm awfully anxious to know what you think of it and to find out if you have any suggestions to make."

I smiled a little as I was led into the projection-room, where almost every evening the star and her husband turn on their consistent diet of amusement, for I realised that in this clever way Mary was going on with her work under cover of entertaining me.

This incident is typical of the whole-souled concentration which I am trying to point out. Every night after dinner the star and her husband see some picture—either one of their own or that of

somebody else. In order to accomplish this they have installed in their home a machine and, just as in the ordinary household you turn on the phonograph, one of their men servants tunes up the silver-sheet. This home, by the way, presents in its luxury a very different setting from the little room where the star first entertained me, for since her marriage to Douglas Fairbanks there has been a marked expansion in her mode of living.

At eight o'clock in the morning Miss Pickford appears in the studio. It is often late in the evening when she leaves it. As to her working environment, this has been so often reproduced that I shall pass over the uproar, the glaring lights, the heat, the long waits, the monotonous repetitions of every scene—all those features which make a motion-picture day the most wearing in the world. Nor is the work less exacting when she is not engaged in actual reproduction. For, after the careful sifting of hundreds of stories, her final choice demands innumerable preliminaries of costume, lighting, directing, scenario-writing, and casting. And always, always she is thinking up bits of business for her next play.

But, the reader may protest, you have given us Mary Pickford chiefly in the terms of work. Can this be all? Is it merely a captain of industry who, in the guise of the wistful, appealing, dark-eyed

. GOLDWYN, DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS AND MARY
CKFORD AT THE STUDIO

BARBARA LA MARR

Whose work in "The Eternal City" stamped her as an actress of stellar size.

slip of a girl, has played upon the heart-strings of the world? Decidedly not! On the screen you can not humbug any of the people any of the time. The camera shows, as the speaking stage does not, the fundamental quality of the human soul. It has not deceived you, therefore, when you exclaim involuntarily, "Isn't she sweet?" the minute you see Mary's face on the screen.

Mary Pickford has a real sweetness of spirit. Furthermore, it is a woman's sweetness. You find it in the look she bends upon her mother, in her greetings to those who work with her, in her love of children and of animals. It was that which led her to write to Mr. Zukor when, after their long career of contract-making, she finally left his organisation, the most affectionate and appreciative of letters. It was certainly that which made the first words I ever heard her utter seem not just a commercial inquiry, but the appealing wonder of a child.

Not only this. She possesses all a woman's capacity for lyric response fused with her man's capacity for epic response. The great romance of Mary Pickford's life is undoubtedly Douglas Fairbanks, and upon this I shall touch when I come to speak of Fairbanks himself.

Chapter Four

FASCINATING FANNY WARD

BEFORE I happened into Adolph Zukor's office that evening, of which I had spoken previously, when Mary Pickford was consulting him about the proper recompense for her indorsement of the cold-cream, I was, of course, already launched on my own adventures with the stellar world.

Through my account of the difficulties experienced by Mr. Zukor and Mary Pickford in arriving at a mutual understanding of a satisfactory wage, the reader may perhaps have gathered that the intercourse between producer and star is often clouded by the individual view-point. A story of my own contacts will not weaken that impression. In fact, before the Lasky Company was six months old I had discovered that the need for adjustment between these two supreme functionaries of the motion-picture world covers a wide ground, where salary represents only a limited space.

Among the first of the stars whom I engaged was Fanny Ward. It was shortly after we made our

first picture that I chanced to meet this widely known actress in the elevator of the Hotel Claridge, New York. Fanny was not in her first youth. There was nothing, however, except her birth certificate to indicate this fact. If Ponce de Leon in his search for the Fountain of Youth had seen her that day he surely would have cried, "Ho, man, we're getting warm!"

I was so struck by that air of youthful witchery which she has so often conveyed on the screen that I ultimately asked her if she would not make some pictures for us. Up to this time her fame had been confined to the speaking stage. But she was at once enthusiastic about the opportunity I presented to her, and in a short time we concluded arrangements for her trip.

The vehicle which we selected for her was "The Marriage of Kitty." But, alas and alack! The vehicle was unequipped with shock-absorbers or even ordinary springs. After some very rough going in California, during which time Mr. de Mille had expressed by wire his dissatisfaction with my newly found star, the picture was sent back East. And along with the picture was shipped Fanny herself.

Almost immediately I was apprised of the latter fact. "Miss Ward phoned you just now," announced my secretary on an otherwise pleasant

morning. "She wants you to call her immediately."

That I did not heed this request was due to a misplaced confidence on my part in the healing quality of Time. When the actress finally succeeded in seeing me I found that Time had done no more for Fanny than it does for a fireless cooker. Instead of cooling it had merely conserved those inner fires.

I had just ordered my dinner on that night when she consummated my capture, and as I saw her bear down upon my table I resigned myself to the inevitable. The inevitable was punctual. "You!" cried she, glaring up at me: "what have you done?"

I was, however, given no time for this solicited autobiography. Instantaneously the actress proceeded to enlighten me upon the one predominant and vital activity of my career. "You have disgraced me in the eyes of Hollywood and New York," she asserted; "that's what you have done. Did I ask to go into pictures? Not much! I had a big reputation on the stage, and then—you come along! You tell me what a future I have in pictures; you persuade me to leave New York and go to California, and now here I am, disgraced, absolutely made a laughing-stock——"

I took advantage of this, her first pause. "There, there," murmured I, fully conscious of the limita-

tions of my soothing technique, "what's the matter?"

"Matter!" she stormed. "Everything's the matter. Your photography's rotten—absolutely no good. And as for your director—say, haven't I been on the stage some years—oughtn't I to know something about the game? And am I to be told what's what by Cecil de Mille?" Et cetera. Et cetera.

The dinner cooled. Not so, Fanny. For fully half an hour the outraged star poured into my ears the tale of her wrongs in that far-away studio. Only my assurance that I would look at the film, which had arrived simultaneously with her, succeeded in stemming the flood-gates.

I did look at it, and my impression was much more favourable than I had hoped. It seemed to me that she had secreened well and I wired to De Mille and Lasky to ask a second opportunity for Fanny. When I communicated this decision to Miss Ward she was so happy and so grateful for my intervention that I felt quite reckless about any financial outcome.

As it happened, however, the Lasky Company was not penalised for giving Fanny her second chance. The next play we assigned her was "The Cheat." This film did four things. Its court scene where Fanny dramatically exposed the brand on

her shoulder established her as an eminent artiste of the screen. It provided a wonderful vehicle for Sessue Hayakawa, the Japanese pantomimist, whom we engaged then for the first time, and was indeed responsible for the rapidity for his ascent to fortune. It also brought Cecil de Mille to the front. And to the Lasky Company it meant a first real "knockout" after a number of moderate successes. Everybody talked about "The Cheat," Fanny Ward, and Sessue.

While making this play Miss Ward was the victim of a studio accident which provided the source of innocent merriment for the entire screen colony in Hollywood. When the cry of "Camera" was given Miss Ward got into action on a rustic bridge spanning a pool. She was attired in a costly ermine coat, a plumed hat, and a Paris gown. Sustained by the consciousness of these assets, as well as by her usual dramatic fervor, she began to trip across the edifice. For a few moments the tripping was good. Then suddenly there was a creak of boards. The creak was followed by a loud ripping noise, the bridge fell, and a moment later the camera, that remorseless Boswell, had recorded Fanny sitting in the pool below.

It was a somewhat inglorious attitude for any heroine, and Fanny was not slow to realise it. Sitting there in her soaked ermine coat with her

plumed hat all awry, she relieved her feelings in a manner highly satisfactory both to herself and to those about her.

"At last," commented one of her fellow actors, hearing this outburst of indignation, "we have seen it—the lake of fire and brimstone."

But it was only a moment after this that the victim was laughing quite as heartily as the spectators. Indeed, among the various tempers which I have looked over in my career as producer, Fanny Ward's variety comes nearest to the ideal recognised as "lovable." Not only is her anger short-lived, but it is accompanied by such warmth of heart and generosity of spirit and it is followed so swiftly by her infectious laugh that one never remembers her stormy moods except with an affectionate smile.

Certainly her residence in Hollywood did much to dispel the horror which the mere mention of California evoked in the minds of many screen performers of that day. Into that former community with its few shops and its unpretentious homes Fanny moved with a suggestion of Eastern pomp. Having been married to a wealthy man and being therefore independent of her salary, she took the largest house in Hollywood and filled it with a fine blend of gold plate, servants, and bric-à-brac.

This home became the rendezvous of the picture-

making colony. If you entered it on Sunday afternoon you found that forty-nine people had preceded you. No hostess could have been more delightful and gracious.

Whatever may be later sources of inspiration in motion-picture festivities those at Fanny Ward's did not wander far from childhood's happy hour. Once, I remember, a donkey-party was tendered. On this occasion Eva Tanguay did everything she could to sustain a famous self-characterisation. She did a bit of comedy work for which this nonsensical game offers such wide scope, convulsing us all with the innocent blundering she so well knows how to simulate.

There was one personal prejudice of Fanny's which is recalled with amusement by all those who used to be invited to those parties. No matter what she served her guests at dinner—lobster, or quail, or turkey—she herself always ate frankfurters. Furthermore, she liked a mob scene of these "hot dogs," and I can see her now as she sat before one of her famous gold platters heaped high with the incongruous fare.

Every other type of refreshment at the Ward home sprang from an equally liberal source. Witness to this fact is supplied by a dinner given by Fanny just previous to a discussion arranged by the Lasky Company, the Famous Players, and the

Triangle Company with a view toward a merger of these organisations. A representative of one of the two rival companies sat beside me while a relentless hospitality was being waged. At last he turned to me pleadingly.

"For Heaven's sake," he whispered, "I want a clear head for our talk. Won't you tell that butler to stop filling my glass?"

"Butler!" I whispered back, almost congealed with horror. "Sh! That's Miss Ward's husband."

This husband, by the way, was Jack Deane, her leading man, whom she married after coming to Hollywood.

Fanny's expenditures began at home, but they did not stay there. She made the same opulent gesture in the studio. Thus I remember that when Percy Hilburn, the cameraman who used to film her, threatened to leave us because we would not raise his salary from one hundred to two hundred a week, the actress made up the extra amount out of her own purse.

"What," she exclaimed, "have Percy leave the place while I am here! A man that can make you look as beautiful as he does me!"

There was, of course, a great deal in what she said. For an expert cameraman can be as flattering as a pink sunshade. However, Fanny was dependent upon his ministrations.

Her sustained ability to look young was especially definite in "Heart's Ease," a Bret Harte story in which she played a seventeen-year-old part. As Fanny's own daughter was at the time just about this same age, newspapers everywhere saw the opportunity for much good-natured fun, and it was after such far-flung propaganda that her close friend Nora Bayes greeted her with a sally I have never forgotten.

The famous comédienne just mentioned was opening up on a certain night in the Orpheum Theatre at Los Angeles. Fanny gave a large dinner that night, including Charlie Chaplin, Marie Doro, and De Wolf Hopper, and after the dinner she asked me if I would not drive into Los Angeles with her to Nora's opening. I did so, and before the comédienne's appearance Fanny took me back of the scenes. Nora came down the stairs to greet us and when she caught sight of her friend she cried, "Why, Fanny Ward, I expected to find you with a rattle in your hand!"

For several years Fanny's screen popularity continued. Then quite gradually she began to go under an eclipse. Why was it? Perhaps she may not have forgotten the proper dramatic mediums. More probably the public failed in its former response to her type of acting. Be that as it may, this decline in popularity—so tragically familiar in the

motion-picture world—left Fanny behind us, a pleasant memory. However, the Lasky Company had always prided itself on fidelity to contract, and we did not depart from this standard in our dealings with Miss Ward. It was she who finally severed our business relations.

I have dwelt upon the career of Fanny Ward at this length, not only because hers is one of the vivid and lovable personalities in the screen world, but because the social atmosphere which she created forms a cherished background for the recollections of many a screen star. To-day if you find yourself in a crowd where Mae Murray, Tommy Meighan, Mabel Normand, and other famous stars are gathered together, you are sure to hear, "Oh, do you remember that evening at Fanny's when she did so and so?"

Chapter Five

MARGUERITE CLARK MISSES FIRE AND EDNA GOODRICH DOESN'T IGNITE AT ALL

MEANWHILE, of course, I had been negotiating with various other stars. Among this number was Marguerite Clark. Miss Clark, you remember, had stirred the public deeply by her beautiful performance in "Prunella," and this success of the speaking stage resulted in a competition between Mr. Zukor and ourselves for her services on the screen. Our final compromise indicates how ably we lived up to the friendly-enemy ideal of conduct.

"See here," called Mr. Zukor over the phone, "I hear you're negotiating with Marguerite Clark. Now I want to tell you something. I'm going to get her, no matter what I have to pay. So you'll do me a favor if you don't bid me up any higher."

I agreed to withdraw, but upon one condition only. The Lasky Company had just secured the rights to Harold McGrath's "The Goose Girl," and we had been thinking for some time that Marguerite would be ideal for the part. My final understanding with my competitor accordingly was

that he should lend us the coveted star for this single picture. In this arrangement, however, we reckoned without Marguerite herself. "What, Marguerite go all the way out to California!" exclaimed the star's sister when I called at the Clark apartment that first evening.

An Astor or a Vanderbilt ordered to go out and hoe potatoes, a Russian nobleman sentenced to Siberia—neither of these could have expressed more profound emotion. Nor was the prejudice of Miss Clark's sister an isolated one. I quote this exclamation, indeed, as significant of an almost universal obstacle I encountered in those early days. Stars did not want to leave New York for California.

I soon suspected that in Marguerite's case the prejudice was a more deep-seated one than could be explained by climate or landscape. The very morning after she agreed to go out to the Lasky studios a young man in the employ of Mr. Zukor came to my office. His name was Harold Lockwood and he will be remembered for his work in some of Mary Pickford's earlier stories, and later as a famous star for the Metro Company.

After a little preliminary clearing of his throat the handsome Harold suggested the purpose of his call. "Ahem," began he, "I hear you've engaged Miss Clark to do a picture for you?"

"Yes, yes, so I have, "retorted I, leafing over a pamphlet.

More pronounced symptoms of nervousness by Harold before he could proceed. "Ahem—well—I just thought—of course you may not be looking for anybody—but——"

We did not take advantage of Harold's willingness to share Miss Clark's banishment, but there are numerous parallel situations where we found the pressure more forceful. Sometimes, in fact, we have been obliged to take a constellation in order to secure the services of the one particular star which graced it. Our engagement of Blanche Sweet, of Pauline Frederick, and later experiences with Geraldine Farrar—these episodes to which I am coming presently—reveal the extent to which some emotional preference influences the contract of the feminine star.

Well, Miss Clark did go to California and she made for the Lasky Company its successful play of "The Goose Girl." The performance was not, however, devoid of friction. From the studio across the continent to my office in New York came constant mutterings of disagreements between Miss Clark and her director, Fred Thompson. Once I wired to De Mille to ask him how the play was coming along, and his answer to the telegram was as follows:

"Don't know much about the play, but geese and photography both looked great."

I have mentioned that Marguerite's sister met me that evening I went up to her apartment. This sister, who was some years older than her celebrated relative, was almost as constant a phenomenon as was Mary Pickford's mother. Indeed, many feminine luminaries of the screen possess one of these adhesive relatives. There is nearly always a mother or brother or sister or husband standing around back of the screens to see that justice is administered.

There was one time when Mary Pickford's supremacy was seriously threatened by the success of this other Famous Players' star. "Is Mary jealous of Marguerite?" I aked Mr. Zukor at this period.

He shook his head. "No," said he. And then he added swiftly, "But it comes to the surface through Mrs. Pickford and Marguerite's sister."

From this remark I gathered that the two doughty supporters of opposing causes used to look at each other about as pleasantly as did the Montagues and Capulets. And if you possess any flair, like Landor, for imaginary conversations, you can easily construct a dialogue between the twain based on their respective claims to the most mail, the most unappeasable demands of exhibitors, the most appreciation from Mr. Zukor.

Yet Mary long outlasted her fair rival. Why was this? Marguerite Clark was beautiful, she was exquisitely graceful, and she brought to the screen a more finished stage technique and a more spacious background than did Miss Pickford. My answer to this question, so often propounded to me, applies not only to Miss Clark, but to all the other actresses who have flashed, meteor-like, across the screen horizon. First of all, she did not have Mary Pickford's absorbing passion for work. Secondly, she did not possess the other artiste's capacity for portraying fundamental human emotion. Simple and direct and poignant, Mary goes to the heart much as does a Foster melody. Herein is the real success of a popularity so phenomenally sustained.

Previous to engaging Miss Ward and Miss Clark, the Lasky Company had secured the services of Blanche Sweet. The performance of this actress in Griffith's "Judith and Bethulia" had lingered in my memory, and almost as soon as we organized I took Lasky to see that film. He was so much impressed that we wired at once to De Mille to negotiate with Miss Sweet, then working under Mr. Griffith in California.

From the first she did not seem satisfied with her new environment. After some days, in fact, she came to me and begged that she be allowed to leave us. She wanted to go back to New York.

"But why?" I pressed her.

After some hesitancy she finally confided the reason of her unrest. Marshall Neilan, whom I have mentioned as playing with Mary Pickford, had been unable to find work in Los Angeles and was taking the train back East the very next day. The result of this conversation was that I sent for Mr. Neilan, and so impressed was I by his intelligence that I engaged him as a director at two hundred and fifty dollars a week. His success was marked from the first and I have already indicated his rapid ascent to fortune.

As to Blanche, who eight years later became Mrs. Marshall Neilan, it was not until she began to work under Mr. Neilan's direction that she justified our expectations of her. I shall never, indeed, forget my disappointment at seeing her first Lasky film.

"What!" thought I. "Can this be the same girl who was so effective in that Griffith picture?"

It was my introduction to a recurrent tragedy in my career as producer. Various times I have been attracted by Griffith successes only to find that they could not thrive in another environment. Just like Trilby when no longer confronted by the hypnotic baton of Svengali, so many of the men and women who have worked under Mr. Griffith can not perform when deprived of his inspiring force.

Meanwhile the Lasky Company had been ex-

panding tremendously. Like an octopus it clutched at all the landscape available in the vicinity of the original livery-stable. New buildings kept going up. New people were being added. So swift was the pace of progress that De Mille's brother William, whom we had sent out meanwhile as a scenario-writer, frequently voiced his leading plaint. He liked to work by himself in a little building away out in a field, but to save his life he could not move that little building fast enough. "I wake up in the morning after I've just staked a fresh claim," he used to say, "and the doggone studio has caught up with me in the night!"

A tremendous impetus was given to both Mr. Zukor and the Lasky Company by an organisation of the distributers who had been handling our films. About six months after Lasky and I went into business these functionaries decided that in order to make themselves a real force they would have to guarantee to theatrical managers throughout the country a larger number of pictures. Their organization, under the name of the Paramount Pictures Corporation, requisitioned one hundred and four films a year, of which our company agreed to supply thirty-six. As this was just three times the number we had planned to produce, you will see the urgency of growth. It is equally evident why our capitalisation now increased from the original

twenty thousand to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

But the domestic market by no means exhausted our outlet. Always I have been penetrated by a sense of international possibilities in the film industry. That this Esperanto of the stage could be communicated to foreign countries—here was the idea which in the early Summer of 1914 sent me speeding to Europe.

I was interested in placing not Lasky products alone, for before my departure Mr. Zukor had asked me if I would not look after his interests also.

Until this time we had engaged in no concentrated drive of the sort. For, although Mr. Zukor had a representative in London, the agency waged only a haphazard, picture-by-picture campaign. Nor was my first important interview pregnant with hope of more systematic sales.

Great Britain had always been active in picture production and her leading distributer was William Jury, who has since been knighted. Mr. Zukor's London representative arranged my meeting with this personage, and from almost the minute I began talking to him I saw that Mr. Jury believed that Britannia rules the films as well as the waves. After he had listened to my enthusiastic praise of both Zukor and Lasky products, he told me that no American company could possibly be as great as I

said we were going to be. To this I retorted that no one so lacking in confidence in a product could possibly be able to sell it. Having thus clarified our views, Mr. Jury and I parted. Almost immediately afterward I helped finance Mr. J. D. Walker to handle both Famous Players and Lasky Films in Great Britain. Under my contract with him he was to take the output of both studios and to pay us ten thousand dollars advance against sixty-five per cent. gross.

After this my progress was comparatively easy. Sweden, Norway, and Denmark promised to buy all the pictures we made at something in the neighbourhood of three thousand dollars each. I closed a deal with Australia guaranteeing to take our complete output at thirty-five hundred dollars a film; Germany put in the same large order at an even higher rate—four thousand each; Belgium and Switzerland contributed their quota, and although France represented our poorest customer, even she did not withhold her mite.

Is it any wonder that as I rode from Berlin to Paris my head reeled with the magnitude of our success? Could this really be I, the poor boy who a short time before had wandered over these very countries with hardly a sou in his pocket?

Yet mine was no miracle of success. I traveled in Europe day and night. I pitted all my enthus-

iasm against many citadels of prejudice and scepticism. When, indeed, I finally sailed from Liverpool I was physically prostrated by the long strain of it all.

Even the triumph which I have just chronicled was doomed to only a partial realisation. I could not anticipate, of course, on that Summer day when, riding from Berlin to Paris, I counted up my thousands, that in a few short weeks a bomb would explode in Sarajevo which would change the map and the psychology and the industrial conditions of the whole world. And I certainly could not foresee, therefore, the broken contracts and the difficulty of obtaining ships to fulfil contracts which followed the declaration of war.

While in Europe I was constantly on the lookout for actors, and one of the results of my search was Edna Goodrich. Miss Goodrich had three assets at this time. She was beautiful; she had created a sensation on the London stage, and she had recently joined the famous recessional of wives of the late Nat Goodwin. Eventually Miss Goodrich made a picture for us at five thousand dollars, with the understanding that if it were successful we should have the first option on her second venture.

Too bad for Miss Goodrich! Too bad for the Lasky Company! Almost the minute De Mille

started to work with her he wired me, "Goodrich too cold."

In the film world this is an epitaph. Nor did Miss Goodrich live down her obituary. Time refused to thaw her, and I was then initiated into the profound truth that many an actress whom individuality of voice and beauty of colouring render glowing on the stage are absolutely calcimined by the camera.

However, my interview with Miss Goodrich resulted profitably in another way. While dining with her at the Carlton in London I was introduced to a tall, broad-shouldered, manly-looking chap with a mop of chestnut-brown curls. From the moment that I saw him I was struck with Tommy Meighan's possibilities for the screen, and when he came to America I wired Lasky to look him over. We engaged him, and Tommy went to California to make his first picture, "The Fighting Hope."

"Tommy no good"; this was the telephoned verdict which De Mille rendered after this initial performance. I was then in San Francisco, and when I arrived in Los Angeles the defendant got to me before the prosecutor.

"See here," announced Tommy ruefully, "they say I'm no good around this place, so I guess I'll clear out. The Universal has made me an offer, anyhow."

"Do nothing of the sort," I commanded. "Wait until I see your picture first."

My view of that picture convinced me that our chief director's opinion had been conceived too hastily. And the outcome of my intercession was a very distinct gain. A year or so planted this star on terra firma. To-day he is one of the most popular actors of the screen.

All this happened in 1914. The next year was one especially significant in motion-picture circles. Among the events contributing to its impressiveness was that Titanic conception of the silver-sheet, "The Birth of a Nation." This Griffith picture which, by the way, was the first screen performance where two dollars a seat was asked, might also have been called "The Birth of Numerous Stars." Mae Marsh, the Gish girls, perhaps a dozen luminaries who have since flashed across the public consciousness, owe their success to parts in the giant canvas.

It was during this year that De Mille and I went to a dinner given to Raymond Hitchcock, at Levy's Café in Los Angeles. We were half-way through when we were attracted simultaneously by a young man who had just sat down at an adjacent table. One look at the clear-cut face and we exclaimed in unison, "Isn't he attractive! Wouldn't he be wonderful in pictures!"

He was wonderful in pictures. For his name

was Wallace Reid. The very next day we engaged him at a salary of one hundred dollars a week, and it was not until this first meeting that we discovered he had already worked at pictures under Mr. Griffith's direction. The untimely death of this gifted and attractive young man, whose future held so much of promise, brought to his profession an irreparable loss.

Chapter Six

THE MISCHIEVOUSNESS OF MAE MURRAY

IN this same eventful year the Lasky Company engaged another actress whose name is now familiar to the motion-picture population of the world. The Ziegfeld Follies of 1915 contained for the first time a screen episode introduced for the presentation of an auto race. From the moment when I saw Mae Murray romp across this incidental screen I saw her possibilities. When I got in touch with her, however, I discovered that several other producers had been inspired by the same belief.

That our organisation was the lucky competitor was due to a very advantageous connection which the Lasky Company had formed some time previously. The chief concern of both Mr. Zukor and our organisation was to get big stories, big plays, and to this end Mr. Zukor and I engaged in a memorable skirmish over Mr. David Belasco. It is apparent, of course, at first glance why the production of this, the most eminent producer of the spoken drama, should have assumed such importance in our eyes. Both of us felt that if we could

only have the screen rights to the Belasco plays we should be placed in an invulnerable position.

In our rival efforts Mr. Zukor had the first advantage, for he had earlier formed a connection with Mr. Daniel Frohman, and through this alliance he was enabled to get into direct touch with Mr. Belasco. I, on the contrary, made all overtures through the great producer's business manager. In spite of Mr. Zukor's lead, the result hung in the balance for many days.

At last, just when I was beginning to despair, Mr. Belasco announced that he would see me. How well I remember that day when with beating heart I sat in the producer's private office awaiting the decision so vital to my organisation! It seemed an eternity that I listened for the opening of a door, and when at last I heard it Mr. Belasco's entrance was as dramatic as that of a hero in one of his own plays. The majestic head with its mop of white hair sunk a trifle forward, the one hand carried inside of his coat—I can see now this picture of him, as slowly, without a word, he descended the stair to greet me.

After I had gathered together my courage I began to talk to him about De Mille and Lasky and our organisation, and he seemed impressed from the first by my enthusiasm. I think he liked the fact that we were all such young men. Indeed, he

said so. And it was this, I am sure, which influenced his decision. He made it that very day, and when I went out of his door my head was swimming with my triumph. Mr. Belasco had promised the Lasky Company the screen rights to all his plays. For these rights, I may mention, we promised him twenty-five thousand dollars advance against fifty per cent. of the profits.

I saw my esteemed but defeated rival at lunch on this very same day, and when I told him the news his face grew white. It was, indeed, a terrific blow. But a reversed decision would have meant even more to me. For such plays as "The Girl of the Golden West" and "Rose of the Rancho" merely helped to offset our leading competitor's tremendous advantage in the possession of such stars as Mary Pickford and Marguerite Clark.

The promise of the Belasco plays influenced favorably many a screen actor of the time, and it was, in fact, my assurance to Mae Murray that she should play "Sweet Kitty Bellairs" which weighed against more dazzling offers from other studios.

Before Mae departed for California she came to me with trouble clouding that fair young brow. "I can't do it," said she.

"Can't do what?" I inquired apprehensively.

"Why, this contract you've made with me; it says that I get one hundred a week and that the com-

pany buys my clothes. Now I can't trust anybody else to pick out what I wear. Clothes are part of my personality and I'd much rather have more salary and have the privilege of buying my own wardrobe."

I yielded the point and allowed her an extra one hundred a week to cover this expenditure. Incidentally, I may remark that Mae could not have saved many nickels from her allowance. There is a tradition that one evening at the Hollywood Hotel the charming little actress changed her evening wrap four times. I can not verify this legend, but I can say that Mae never changes from bad to worse. She is regarded as one of the most beautifully dressed women of the screen.

The clothes-cloud was dispelled from Mae's horizon. Unfortunately, however, more severe storms awaited her in California. First of all, she was rent by the commands of a director whose conception of her talents had nothing in common with Mae's own.

"Be more dignified. Remember that you are a lady, not a hoyden"; this was the spirit if not the substance of guidance.

At some such suggestion Mae would protest angrily. "But I'm a dancer—that's the reason I was engaged. And now you want to turn me into something different. I tell you I'll be an utter failure if you go on like this."

Mae's anger, was, of course, perfectly justifiable. Her subsequent successes have verified this fact. Without the infectious mad-cap gaiety which she herself appraised so correctly from the first we should never have had George Fitzmaurice's great success, "On with the Dance," or "Peacock Alley."

Miss Murray found another obstacle to overcome during those first days. Fresh from a different medium she knew nothing of the workings of the camera. This knowledge, so important in assuming the pose most beneficial to oneself, was gradually imparted by a young chap in the cast of her play.

"Say," said he, "that guy's giving you a raw deal. He's trying to get his friend on the set right and you can take what's left of the camera."

"But what shall I do?" asked she helplessly, "I don't know how to stand or look."

"You watch me," rejoined the good Samaritan. "I'll put you wise."

Right then and there he arranged a code by which to defeat the operations of a cameraman who, according to report, did not administer his lens with impartial fervour. If he put his finger to his left cheek it meant, "Turn to the left"; to the right, and the gesture was equally logical. From this point onward the system progressed to all the most minute provisions for securing some of the coveted attention.

How to engross the most of the camera! I regret to say that here on the roof of this ambition has been wrecked many a lofty nature. The public does not realise as it watches the beautiful feminine star look up at the handsome male star over the moonlit stile the warfare that may possibly have occurred as to which should get the more advantageous focussing. Nor does it interpret the moving subtitle, "Promise me you'll leave me," which may accompany this scene, in its correct spirit of "Promise me you'll leave me—a little of the camera." I have known sweethearts strangely impervious to the higher point of view when it came to this test. And I shall tell presently of a husband who skirmished fiercely with his famous wife on this particular point.

Mae's case was far from indicative of such unappeasable appetite. Her struggle was only for a just share of the camera. Indeed, she has too much respect for a good story ever to offend by insistence on an individual prominence, which often destroys the story.

She did insist on another director and on claiming my promise of "Sweet Kitty Bellairs." Both wishes were gratified. But perhaps, in spite of her avowed admiration for the workmanship of Jimmie Young, no director ever really took with her until she met Bobby Leonard.

"Girls, girls," she cried on the evening of the

day after she had first worked under Bobby, "I've got a great director at last!"

She was radiant. As she tripped across the lot to her dressing-room her blue eyes danced exactly like those of the little girl who has finally drawn the gold ring at the merry-go-round. Nor did her gratification stop at the studio. For, as all motion-picture fans know, she subsequently married Viking Leonard, and they have been engaged in living happily ever since.

Again I realise that I seem to be piping the honeyed lay of the press-agent. And once more I protest my innocence. Bobby Leonard and Mae Murray have, like Doug and Mary, one of those marriages based on an intense common interest. They are both absorbed in pictures and together they work out direction, business, costuming, and all the minor chores of creating a picture. It is undoubtedly due to this co-operation that Mae's achievements have broadened so notably in the past few years.

I have told of Mae's early struggles with objective light-heartedness. She herself recounts them to-day with a full appreciation of their humour. But there is another more vital approach to the subject. You must consider that every picture is tremendously significant to the screen actor involved. If it succeeds, well and good. If it is a "flop" the

proportionate damage to the actor's reputation is infinitely greater. I think I am safe in saying that if even such emphatic successes as Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, or Griffith were to make two or three successive failures they would find the coming back somewhat difficult. In fact, I have often heard Mr. Griffith remark, "I simply can not afford to make a failure."

In the light of such knowledge, the heartache of Mae's first weeks on the Lasky lot are instantly apparent. Here she was, fully conscious of what that first picture meant in her career. And here at every step she was met by circumstances pointing to failure. And such heartaches, such beating of wings against barriers of prejudice and misunderstanding and actual hostility—those palpitate through many of the disputes recorded in this volume.

Chapter Seven

GERALDINE THE GREAT

IN the early Winter of 1915 I went to the stage production of "Maria Rosa." Who that witnessed the same performance can ever forget the creation of Mr. Lou Tellegen? That Latin lover whose ferocity showed in every silken accent, in every gesture of panther-like, slim body—to-day this lingers with me as among the most telling of dramatic brush-strokes.

How distinctly I remember the first day that the young foreign actor, who, previous to his triumph in "Maria Rosa" had been hailed as "Bernhardt's beautiful leading man," came to my office! We were talking about salary when suddenly Tellegen jumped up from his chair and walked over to look at a photograph on the wall.

"Who is that?" he asked, peering at the face in the frame.

"Oh," answered I, "don't you know her? That's Geraldine Farrar."

"Oh, yes, the famous singer," he responded, never taking his eyes from the dazzling victorious

face. "H'm—very, very beautiful, is she not?" he mused.

I had hoped that he was perhaps permanently swept away from the theme which he had relinquished so abruptly. I had, however, underrated Mr. Tellegen's powers of recuperation. A moment more and he was standing before me with a light in his eyes very different from that evoked by the abstract consideration of Beauty.

"Let us say a thousand dollars a week," said he. "Certainly after all my experience I ought to be worth that."

Mention of Mr. Tellegen brings me logically to one achievement of my life which I always survey with pride. The year and a half that had elapsed since the production of "The Squaw Man" had brought almost incredible improvements in both the manufacture and presentation of photo-plays. The modern system of lighting had replaced our former reliance upon the rays of the sun. More and more we had substituted the carpenter for the scene-painter. As to the motion-picture theatre itself, this of course presented an aspect very different from the peanut-strewn area which in 1913 had suggested my great enterprise.

However, in spite of orchestral accompaniments and high-priced seats, in spite of the growing ascendancy of such screen stars as Mary Pickford

and Charlie Chaplin, the motion-pictures were merely popular. They were not fashionable. How to make them so, how to intrigue that shy marginal group known as "the carriage trade"—here was the challenge offered to the producer of 1915.

It was about this time that Morris Gest came to me and said: "I think I've about got Geraldine Farrar to the point where she's willing to go into motion-pictures. What's more, I believe she'll come with you instead of with Zukor, for the idea of California is attractive to her, especially if she can go and come in a private car."

After a smile at this approach to the situation on the part of Miss Farrar I asked him, "But how does the famous prima donna look these days?"

"Wonderful? More beautiful than ever," retorted Gest.

On the first evening when Lasky and I called at Miss Farrar's home we found that Gest's enthusiasm was not misplaced. As she swept into the drawing-room to greet us we both thought we had never in our lives seen any one so beautiful.

It did not take long to arrange matters between us. Miss Farrar agreed to go to California for eight weeks to make three pictures—"Maria Rosa," "Carmen," and "Temptation." For these services she was to receive twenty thousand dollars and, in consideration of the modesty of the sum—she

would have realised more for a concert tour of the same length—we agreed to supply her with a special car to and from Los Angeles, together with a furnished house, servants, and food during the period of her stay.

On all such minor points Miss Farrar was immediately reasonable. Only in one subject did she display any vital curiosity.

"Whom are you going to engage for my leading man," she asked.

"Never mind. It will be somebody that you'll like," we assured her.

"But," she urged, "you know it's very important that my Don José should be right. Otherwise the performance would be ruined."

Again we assured her that she was sure to be satisfied with our provision for this part.

"But who is he?" she insisted. "I want to know his name."

We evaded this request. And we kept on evading it throughout our subsequent interviews. This was not easy, for in every spare moment the prima donna would plead with me, "Why won't you tell me his name?" It was almost the first question she asked after she stepped from the special train bearing her into California.

So many people have asked me for my first impression of Geraldine Farrar that I should like to

interpolate here my response to that frequent inquiry. If you can picture a flowering arbour and then picture the subsequent surprise of finding inside of it a perfectly good dynamo you will have conceived the full force of Miss Farrar's personality. At the time when I met her she was in her early thirties and that beauty of lucent grey eyes and curving lips—the flowering vigour of look which she doubtless inherited from some ancestress of the Irish seas—was then at its height. Under this screen of physical allure I felt from the very first moment the pulse of a mind restless, eager, alert to every possibility of learning.

Indeed, the figure with which I started falls short of conveying the full effect of Miss Farrar's presence. Not only does she charge the atmosphere with that mental vitality of hers, she creates the impression always of cutting—cutting straight through any given subject. If I had said, therefore, that the arbour concealed one of those marvellous implements that cut, thrash, and sack the grain, all in a single operation, I should have come nearer the ideal of description.

Miss Farrar is, like Mary Pickford, a captain of industry. She has the same masculine grasp of business, the same masculine approach to work. The difference between them is construed not alone by the immeasurably greater cultural equipment of

Miss Farrar but by many temperamental divergences. Whereas Mary Pickford's manner and voice are always marked by the feminine, almost child-like appeal to which I have referred, the prima donna's speech has a man's directness of import. She picks her words for strength, as might a Jack London sea-captain or an Elizabethan soldier. And her utterance of these words reveals the same strange compound of qualities I have noted elsewhere. It is an enunciation both flowering and incisive.

The cantatrice's entrance into Hollywood was an unprecedented one. The Mayor of Los Angeles was there to welcome her to California. So were five thousand school children. Cowboys in their chaps and sombreros added their customary picturesqueness to the scene. Flowers were everywhere. All Los Angeles reminded you of a festa day in some Italian city. Nowadays we are so accustomed to spectacular personages in the motion-pictures that it is hard to recapture for you the thrill that shook the entire country when Geraldine Farrar, the queen of the Metropolitan Opera House, came to California.

The night following Miss Farrar's arrival we gave her a dinner at the Hollywood Hotel. This dinner included among its two hundred guests, not only the leading representatives of the screen col-

ony, but a number of distinguished sojourners. Among the latter may be mentioned Mr. John Drew and Miss Blanche Ring.

At this dinner-party Miss Farrar turned to me almost at once with her habitual question. "And now surely," she pleaded, "you're going to tell me who is to be my Don José?"

De Mille and I exchanged a haggard glance. Many, many times had we shuddered together over the thought, "What if she doesn't like him?" Our previous experience with stars had taught us not to minimise that possible calamity.

"Tell me," repeated our great planet. "Not another minute will I wait!"

I was just about to reply when I looked up. A tall young man had entered the door and was now walking toward us. He was only twenty-three. His evening clothes were by no means faultless, but the face above them was flushed with excitement. The blue eyes shone. I had never seen Wallace Reid look more like the beautiful and romantic young man of the daguerreotype collection.

"There," I whispered, watching her tensely, "there is your leading man."

She had already noticed him and as he moved slowly toward us she never took her eyes from his face. At last, just before he reached us, she began

slowly nodding her head. "Very good," she whispered, and the smile with which she said it lingered as she repeated the encomium. "Very, very good."

I do not need to dwell upon the relief afforded to us by that smile. I venture to suggest, however, that it may have brought corresponding heart's ease to Wallace himself. For he was then young and inexperienced and I have no doubt that for many days previous he, too, had been quailing before that grim possibility, "What if she doesn't like me!"

A number of the screen people were inspired with awe of Miss Farrar's reputation. "I bet anything she's up-stage," several of them predicted before meeting her. That evening disarmed all such fears. So simple and friendly, so gay and unaffected, was the Metropolitan star that everybody went away singing her praises. I soon found, indeed, that the ancestry of the Irish seas had dowered her with more than that flowering vigour of look and manner. She has the warmth of personal approach, the ability to get along with folks of all descriptions, that characterise the Irish race.

This element in her character was brought out particularly in the studio. It was not long before everybody there, including "Grips" and "Props"—the local terms by which are designated respectively the electricians and the property men—were calling

LOU TELLEGEN AND GERALDINE FARRAR

This photograph, it should be said, was taken some time ago.

THEDA BARA

Original screen vampire, now retired as the wife of Charles Brabin.

her "Jerry." This intimacy of reference was a token of real affection and it was deserved, for she seldom passed the most humble worker in the studio without a smile or a friendly word.

When she arrived in Hollywood she didn't know, of course, a single thing about making a film. "What," she exclaimed on her first day, "why, I didn't realize you had to make a single scene over four times." This freshness of view-point placed her in a situation ideal for observation of the mental eagerness of which I have spoken. She asked questions of everybody in the studio from De Mille to "Grips." It was wonderful to see the zest of her application to this new task, to watch that perfect implement of a brain cut and thresh and assort its selected subject.

There is no doubt about it. Geraldine Farrar enjoyed every minute of those first eight weeks spent in the movies. She loved the atmosphere of the motion-pictures. She liked the people in the cast. She told me she thought De Mille was great. I can hardly express what this wide area of satisfaction meant to me after eighteen months that had been instructive chiefly in the hardship of pleasing any star, at any given point.

So eager was Miss Farrar for her film day to begin that she used to arrive at the studio every morning at eight o'clock. She was then all made

up for the set, and as this process is so much more exacting than the average woman's dab of powder and rouge, one knew she had risen not later than six.

"H'm, where's Mr. de Mille? Where's everybody?" she used to ask.

Her manner was exactly that of a war-horse sniffing, "Here am I. Where's the war?"

And when she began to work nothing seemed to tire her. At four o'clock in the afternoon, that hour when the average screen performer begins to wonder if she'll melt before she takes root or take root before she melts, the great prima donna was as radiant with energy as she was at eight o'clock in the morning. The explanation of this sustained vitality lay deeper than her undoubted physical strength. She herself voiced it one day during her second engagement with the Lasky Company.

She was then making "Joan the Woman." It was during the most intense heat of the California Summer. During this particular set she wore a suit of armor which must have been about as soothing to her feelings as wrist-warmers to a resident of Bombay. The set, which had been called for one hour, was not actually taken until more than four hours' later. This wait, so characteristic of a studio day, was rendered more oppressive by the thud of

adjacent carpentry work and by experimentation with the glaring electric lights.

While all this was going on a lady of the court of Charles VII. sat with her make-up box on her knee and from time to time dabbed with powder beads of perspiration rising above the surface of grease-paint. This manifestation of warmth was not unprovoked. For the lady wore a velvet dress with heavy trimming of fur and her head was engulfed in one of those gigantic coiffures prescribed for mediæval times. No wonder that as she administered her powder she made sweet moan about the hardships of life on "the lot."

"People that think this life's easy," she muttered at last, "let them try it on a July day—let them wait around for hours all tucked up in these hot-water bottles of clothes. Whew! Say, are they ever going to start shooting?"

"Cut out your grouching," retorted a more stoical fellow sufferer, "look how Jerry's taking it."

"Jerry" presented, as a matter of fact, anything but a wilted appearance. She was talking, now to this person, now to that. Her eyes were sparkling, her white teeth flashed in a frequent smile. Piqued by such revelations of fortitude, the first lady of the court walked over to her.

"Won't you tell me how you do it, Miss Farrar?"

she asked. "Don't you ever mind anything; the heat or the long waits or anything?"

"Jerry" threw back her head and laughed heartily. "Not a bit of it," she answered, "I'm too much interested all the time to know what's happening on the outside of me."

It was during the production of this same play that some gentlemen of the court of Charles VII. availed themselves of a contemporary solace. A long shot had been taken of the French court and it had been taken, according to custom, four times. None of these occasions had revealed anything wrong and it was only when De Mille "saw the rushes"—the technical term describing a first view of the previous day's shots—that he discovered an anachronism which would have made Sir Walter Scott's offenses in this direction seem blameless.

"For Heaven's sake," he cried, "look at that! The gentlemen of the fourteenth century are chewing gum!"

Miss Farrar whooped with merriment over this historical discrepancy, and to-day the incident supplies her with a favorite motion-picture story. I may mention casually that this mistake is eloquent with the possibilities of waste involved in a single wrong performance of a single extra performer.

In this case we used up a thousand feet of film and the hundreds of dollars involved in wages,

lights, and other expenses on a scene which, of course, had to be entirely remade.

The eminent singing actress often showed back of the screens that impulsive generosity which has endeared her to so many people. Once she did not like the gown worn by a certain extra. Neither did the extra.

Quick as a flash Miss Farrar sent her maid to her residence in Hollywood to obtain a costume from her own personal wardrobe. And when she put this raiment into the extra's hand it was for keeps. She sometimes lent her fine jewels to people in the cast, and her frequent "small" gifts to those about her were what most of us would call large. Such donations were always performed with a certain splendour of gesture that made one think of a mediæval prince taking off the gold chain around his neck to give to somebody who had chanced to say, "What a beautiful piece of jewelry you are wearing."

If, indeed, Miss Farrar is a captain of industry, she belongs to that particular branch which flourished in the Florence of the fifteenth century.

While she was making "Maria Rosa" there befell Miss Farrar the great romantic adventure of which the world has heard so much. As a result of my interview with Mr. Lou Tellegen he was engaged by the Lasky Company to go to Hollywood

during the Summer of 1915. He was not playing in Miss Farrar's productions and it was not until after some days spent in California that the two met.

Mr. Fred Kley was responsible for the introduction. Here at this widely known figure of the film world I feel bound to pause for a few words of tribute. Kley, who now occupies an important position in the organization of the Famous Players-Lasky organization, had gone to California with Cecil de Mille. He it was who had selected the original site of the livery-stable, and after the Lasky Company moved there he had attended to a wide variety of details.

He kept books—often on the back of stray envelopes; he hired extra performers; he assembled properties, and when De Mille imported several rattlesnakes for the production of "The Squaw Man" it was he, I believe, who ministered to these pets. I am sure that Briareus with his hundred hands never accomplished more than did honest, faithful, Fred Kley with his limited equipment.

I shall give Mr. Kley's own account of the introduction, for certainly nothing could be more vivid. "Mr. Tellegen happened to be with me one day," he recounts, "when Miss Farrar, still in the Spanish costume she had been wearing in 'Maria Rosa' walked across the lot. 'I want to meet Miss

Farrar,' said Mr. Tellegen, 'Won't you take me over?' I did and I've never seen anything like it before nor since. It was just as if a spark came from his eyes and was met by one from hers.

"They began speaking in French right away," adds he, "and of course I couldn't understand. But, believe me, there's a whole lot in a tone, and their tones gave them away as much as their eyes did. He walked across the lot with her, then to her dressing-room. And after that you'd see them together all the time just the minute they could get away from a set."

In the light of this personal experience of Geraldine Farrar, that frequent question of hers "Who is to be my Don José" is invested with a strange, perverse, almost sinister, quality of destiny. It was not the Don José of her own life drama that she met in Lou Tellegen. It was the Toreador. When she came to California her heart, according to rumour, had not been untouched. But if this same rumour is to be credited further, it had never before been subjugated. Like the heroine of the drama and the opera with which she is so brilliantly identified, she had always retained her supremacy in love. Like this same Carmen, she surrendered at last, not to the most loving, but to the most conquering type.

The last memory of the beautiful Farrar's first

visit to Hollywood centers about the station from which pulled out her special train.

Tellegen had, of course, come down to see her off, and as the engine steamed away on its long eastern course the actor could be seen running along the platform beside the car from which his love still clung to his hand. For many yards he raced along and it was only a sudden acceleration of the engine that finally parted those reluctant hands.

A very different leave-taking from the one I shall record when several Summers afterwards Geraldine Farrar again came to Hollywood, this time to make pictures for the Goldwyn studio!

Chapter Eight

THE DISCOVERY OF CHARLIE CHAPLIN

WHILE the Lasky Company and the Famous Players organizations were taking their long and often competitive strides forward numerous other motion-picture enterprises had been coming into prominence. Among these was the Fox Company.

Some years ago William Fox bought the story, "A Fool There Was." For its leading rôle he engaged a very prominent actress. She disappointed him at the last moment, and it was while he was at his wit's end to know how to replace her that he happened to go one day into his casting department. There were several extras standing around in the hope of picking up a day's work, and among these Fox's eye fell upon a dark-eyed girl. He looked at her. He looked again. Finally he said to his casting director, "I wish you'd have some tests made of that girl. It seems to me she's got possibilities."

The tests were made. They were so satisfactory that the girl was cast for the leading rôle of "A

Fool There Was." In it she scored such a triumph that Fox bought immediately more similar vehicles for her. The girl's name was Theda Bara, and "A Fool There Was" was the first of the vamp stories which for some time seemed to consume the motion-picture industry.

Among producer, of a very different type, who had been waxing strong during these first years of our development, was Mack Sennett. Sennett, originally a chorus man earning five dollars a day, had been associated with Griffith in the old Biograph studios. From these he departed with only about five or six hundred dollars, and he produced his first films without any studio at all. The cameraman overcame this fundamental lack by focussing on people's front lawns and on any other part of the landscape which looked appealing. When at last his financial returns justified it Sennett established a studio near Los Angeles.

Mack's specialty had always been comedies, and among his early stars was that noted screen comedian of another day, Ford Sterling. At the time when the Lasky Company started, Sterling was getting a salary phenomenal for that period. Yet, being a perfectly normal star, he kept wanting more, and it was in an hour when Sennett feared he would not be able to keep pace with these in-

creasing demands that he cast about him for some one to take Sterling's place.

In this period of vigilance he chanced to go to Pantages' in Los Angeles. Among the acts of this performance, which represented the second circuit—that employing the less costly talent of the organisation—there lingered in his mind the work of one comedian.

Months afterwards when Sterling really seemed on the point of leaving, Sennett thought immediately of the little comedian in the second circuit. He did not know where he was. He could not even remember his name. But he wired to an Eastern representative, "Get in touch with fellow called Chapman or Chamberlain—something like that—playing second circuit."

The representative had a hard time locating the person thus vaguely defined. At last, however, in a little Pennsylvania town the agent caught up with Charlie Chaplin. He was getting fifty dollars a week for his work in vaudeville, and when Sennett took him on at one hundred and twenty-five he seemed stunned by his good fortune.

And did he make good at once in motion-pictures? Mack has told me that he did not.

"It was days and days," the latter relates, "before Charlie put over anything real. He tried all sorts of make-ups—one of them I remember was

a fat man—and they were all about equally flat. The fact of it was that for some time I felt a little uneasy as to whether my find was a very fortunate one."

It must be remembered at this point, however, that Chaplin encountered at the outset of his screen career an almost inflexible conception of humour. He himself has told me how he had to combat this prejudice in creating his very first picture.

"I was a tramp in that story," he recalls, "and they wanted me to do all the usual slap-stick stunts. I had to beg them to let me play the part my way. 'If you want somebody to pull all the old gags,' I said to Sennett, 'why do you hire me? You can get a man at twenty-five dollars to do that sort of stuff.' So at last they gave in to my idea. This I had worked out very carefully. A tramp in a fine hotel—there's a universal situation for you. Hardly a human being that hasn't duplicated the feeling of being poor, alone, out of touch with the gay crowd about him, of trying to identify himself somehow with the fine, alien throng. So I did the little touches here of imitation—the pulling down of shabby cuffs, the straightening of my hat, all the gestures that gave a wider meaning to the characterization."

Chaplin's own account of his start is eloquent of the creative imagination which has made him the

supreme exponent of screen art. This first picture was a success. Even so, there were those in the Sennett studios who looked askance upon such advanced methods.

"They didn't really appreciate Charlie in those early days," so Mabel Normand has often said to me. "I remember numerous times when people in the studio came up and asked me confidentially, 'Say, do you think he's so funny? In my mind he can't touch Ford Sterling.' They were just so used to slap-stick that imaginative comedy couldn't penetrate."

When Chaplin went out to California to make his first pictures he found the pantomimist just quoted a star in the Sennett organization. After having been a model for Gibson and other noted illustrators, Mabel had worked with Mary Pickford and Blanche Sweet in the Biograph studios. She was still here when Sennett, meeting her on the street one day, said, "How about going to California at a hundred dollars a week? I've just got some backing for my company and I'm going to settle out there in a short time."

Mabel had been rendered incredulous by her salary at the Biograph. She was so sceptical of there being any such salary as a hundred dollars a week that Sennett's backers, to whom he had referred her, thought she was hesitating because of the in-

sufficiency of the recompense. They thereupon offered her twenty-five dollars more.

Not long ago my friend Edgar Selwyn, the theatrical producer and playwright, said to me: "We hear so much about our successful stars as they are to-day. Yet most of us are a great deal more curious to hear the details of their earlier years." With this in mind I am devoting a short space to the Sennett studio of a former time, for, although these days did not come under my direct observation, they have been described to me so often by Mabel Normand and Chaplin and Sennett himself that they seem almost like a portion of my own experience. Certainly, too, such flash-backs are necessary to a complete participation in the stories of my own immediate contacts with these two stars.

The older Sennett studio, like the stable which first cradled the Lasky Company, presented a striking contrast to the modern film background with its meticulous divisions of labour, its attempts to introduce the efficiency methods of a business establishment. Everybody knew everybody else; all the performers talked over in the most intimate fashion the details of the day's work; the stars could and did do all such chores as cutting films.

Instead of a honeycomb of dressing-rooms, there was a communal space where all the men put on their make-up; as to Mabel's dressing-room, this

was a crude, boarded cubicle with the oil-stove familiar to all the old-timers in California studios. Altogether, an atmosphere informal and light-hearted as that which we imagine surrounding a group of strolling players in Elizabethan times!

Every one knows the long rainy seasons which in California interrupt those months of brilliant, unflagging sunshine. During such times the rain would drip ceaselessly from the roof of Sennett's projection-room, and his actors, shivering from the cold dampness, used to gather together after the day's work around the one cozy spot in the studio—the oil-stove in Mabel's dressing-room. Here, by the hour Chaplin, a slender little fellow of twenty-two or three, attired unvaryingly in a checked suit, used to sit and talk with Mabel about work, books, and life. They were great pals, these two, and whenever Charlie wanted a raise he would go to Mabel and say, "Come now, you ask Mack for me."

Sometimes, according to those who worked with the pair, the friendship was invaded by a little feeling of rivalry, especially on Chaplin's part. This was hardly strange, for Mabel's talent as a comédienne was undoubted, and to this gift she added not only her experience on the screen but a very exceptional beauty. Of course the sentiment was only fleeting, but every now and then something would bring it to the surface.

One day when Chaplin entered the studio he found Mabel standing beside the camera. Running over to Sennett, he asked the producer what it all meant.

"Oh, nothing," replied Mack. "Only I've asked Mabel to direct you to-day."

Chaplin said nothing, but for an hour or so he was quite evidently ruffled. Before the end of the day, however, all irritation had vanished in the boxing-bout which represented the favorite muscular outlet of the two young comedians.

Charlie and Mabel, as will be remembered, appeared in many comedies together. One of their scenes which the public was never permitted to share involved a motor-cycle. On being asked if he could ride this vehicle Charlie had replied promptly that he could.

"Now you're sure you know how, Charlie?" Sennett inquired of him again as on the day the scene was to be taken he confronted the comedian with this modern mechanism.

"Why, of course I do," maintained Charlie stoutly, "I used to cycle all about London." With no apparent trepidation he mounted the cycle. Mabel jumped on behind him. An instant afterward those watching the performance saw the two riders whirling down a steep hill with a fury that made a nor'easter look cool and collected.

"Talk about Jock Gilpin's ride!" laughs Mabel to-day as she tells the story. "I knew from the moment we set out that Charlie hadn't the least idea in the world how to guide or stop that machine, and as the trees and hills whizzed by us I closed my eyes. My only wonder was when and how badly. At last it happened. When I opened my eyes again it was from a long unconscious state. I had been dashed into a ditch at the side of the road, and a little farther on they found the souvenirs of poor old Charlie. You see," she concludes, "he hadn't realised that there was any difference between a cycle and a motor-cycle."

Just a little farther on I shall pick up the thread of Miss Normand's career where it became interwoven with my own professional interests. In the meanwhile closing these glimpses of the Sennett studio in its early days, I shall proceed to developments in the Lasky Company.

It had long been apparent to me that a merger of the Lasky and the Famous Players organizations promised many benefits. It would put an end to the costly competition for stars and stories and it would effect a corresponding reduction in other expenses. To all such arguments, however, Mr. Zukor turned a deaf ear, and it was not until 1916 that I succeeded in overcoming his reluctance. Then, under the name of the Famous Players-

Lasky Company, these two enterprises, which only a few years before had launched out with a capital representing conjointly less than one hundred thousand dollars, were incorporated at twenty-five million!

It was a radiant day for me when the vision of this gigantic unification, held so persistently for many months, finally took form. But, as so often happens, the fulfilment of my most cherished dream proved to be a weapon, turned against me. Mr. Zukor was the president of the new organisation; I was chairman of the board of directors. I shall not enter here into the differences which sundered us, both men accustomed to domination, I shall merely relate that only a few months after the formation of the new company I resigned my interests in the Famous Players-Lasky organisation.

But before leaving this phase of my career I want to pay my heartfelt tribute to the man whom I consider responsible for much of the success won by Lasky films, Cecil de Mille!

Although I have had occasion to mention several instances where his judgment was at fault, I have never once lost the sense of how disproportionate these rare flaws were to the sum of his achievement. As a matter of fact, De Mille is seldom wrong in his valuations of either performer or story. Again and again his judgment proved superior to both

Lasky's and mine. Then, too, he adds to the qualities which make him a big director, a gift for personal relations which I have seldom seen equalled. Farrar was only one of the many Lasky stars who "got along" wonderfully with our chief director. The courteous, self-controlled, kindly De Mille—who, indeed, could dislike him?

Certainly my own thought of him always reaches far beyond our mere professional association. To me at a time when I most needed it De Mille was a true friend, and the memory of his truth and loyalty illumines one of the bitterest chapters of my life.

Chapter Nine

STARS, STARS, STARS!

WELL, I left my company and I was then not quite thirty-five years of age. I was accustomed to a life where every working hour was inspired by the one thought, "How can I make the Lasky Company more significant?" You can imagine, therefore, the terrible blankness of those days following my resignation. Feverishly I cast about me for a new outlet for my organising energy, and in the Autumn of 1916 I, together with my friends Archie and Edgar Selwyn, the theatrical producers, Margaret Mayo, and Arthur Hopkins, the theatrical producer, founded the Goldwyn Motion Picture Company.

The beginning of this second film venture of mine involved conditions very different from those which attended the start of the Lasky Company three years before. Then the story was supreme and the Lasky Company was successful without any really overshadowing personalities. True, the field presented some great celebrities such as Mary Pickford, but the emphasis was not placed upon

the player to the degree which afterward swayed the producer. Constantly this emphasis became more irresistible, and by the time that I started the Goldwyn Company it was the player, not the play, which was the thing.

Every theatre-owner in the country wanted personalities. Stars were now made over night. New names came out in electric light almost every evening. Obviously, therefore, the only guarantee for the success of a new motion-picture organisation was the assemblage of a list of big names.

Hence it was upon an array of planets that the Goldwyn Company concentrated its initial energy. The first star we engaged was Mabel Normand; the second, Mae Marsh; the third, Madge Kennedy. Add to these such towering figures from other histrionic firmaments as Mary Garden, Jane Cowl, and Maxine Elliott, and you will see why our competitors were warranted in feeling a deep uneasiness. For the engagement of these people was attended by enormous publicity. Newspapers featured many of our stellar connections and, added to this, huge posters blazoned with the names of our trophies carried promise of greatness to every hamlet in America. The first thing that I did, in fact, was to scatter these posters broadcast.

Perhaps at first I did not quite realise that in building up the Lasky name I had been in reality

creating a Frankenstein. Later, however, the full force of this figure was to occur to me, for at every turn I was met by the ruthless competition of the Famous Players-Lasky Company. This was particularly acute in the engagement of stars.

Added to obstructions of bitter rivalry came a personal misfortune. While playing hand-ball at the Athletic Club one day I broke my ankle. This kept me away from our studio for three months and, as my associates were inexperienced in picture-production, my absence meant a loss to the company of thousands of dollars. It was, indeed, a maddening situation for one attempting to launch a new business where the odds were already sufficiently against him.

It would seem as if the Greek dramatists had not overdrawn things. When the gods decide they want to make things hard for you, they are thorough, they overlook no executive detail. The first Goldwyn film was just being released when America announced her participation in the War. Heretofore the conflict had spelled advantage rather than disaster to the American producer, inasmuch as our films had become the rage in all neutral countries. But with America's precipitation came a new set of conditions. These, oppressive enough to picture industries long established, almost succeeded in crushing our new venture.

First on the list were transportation difficulties. We were now unable to procure space on ships to move our products. This handicap was accompanied by shortage of fuel, conservation of light, and scarcity of labor. The second obstacle of this group became so acute that we were sometimes obliged to use four studios in order to complete a day's production. Obviously, therefore, our only chance of survival lay in removing our establishment from the Fort Lee studio, where we had been operating, to a California one. This we did in the Summer of 1918.

Somewhat less than two years after America's entrance into the War our pay-roll was ninety thousand dollars. How to meet it—here was the question which tortured every waking hour. At last I felt it incumbent upon me, as the largest single stockholder in the company, and as the individual in our group personally responsible for loans amounting to eight or nine hundred thousand dollars, to lay the whole situation frankly before my associates. With one accord they advised that the company should go into the hands of a receiver.

I could not sleep that night when everything which I had been building for the past years threatened to go down with the morrow. Money, credit, my reputation as a producer—how, how

was I to save them? Spent by my vigil I arrived in my office the next morning.

Here after a talk with Mr. Schay, the controller of our company, it seemed to me that the one reprieve of which I had thought during the night was really available. The reprieve was this. We had branches in twenty-five different cities. Each branch represented two or three thousand dollars of ready money. By removing the total amount from all of them we should be enabled to meet one week's pay-roll.

"And how about next week?" asked the controller.

I shrugged my shoulders. But inside I was thinking fiercely that something had to happen.

It did. The very next week the armistice was signed. From this moment the entire complexion of the picture situation changed. Shipments to Europe came about almost immediately. Other difficulties cleared away. It was not long before the Du Ponts, of Wilmington, and other prominent financiers invested seven million dollars cash in the Goldwyn Company.

With this new capitalisation all my financial struggles ended. To-day the organisation which bears my name is one of the three largest companies in the world.

One day, while the receivership was threatening,

MABEL NORMAND

Whom Mr. Goldwyn pronounces the greatest comedienne in the world.

MAXINE ELLIOTT

As she appeared in "The Eternal Magdalene" in 1917.

MABEL NORMAND

Whom Mr. Goldwyn pronounces the greatest comedienne in the world

MAXINE ELLIOTT

As she appeared in "The Eternal Magdalene" in 1917.

Mabel Normand came up to my desk and handed me a long envelope. "What is this?" I asked her.

"My Liberty bonds," she answered, "There are only fifty thousand dollars worth of them, but if they will tide you over you may have them."

Those interested in the personality of Mabel Normand can receive no more illuminating introduction to her than the incident just sketched. There are a hundred tales of this characteristic response to any human appeal clustering about the name of Mabel Normand. One which came directly under my observation relates to a poor girl with a dependent family. This girl was stricken with tuberculosis and, although Mabel did not know her, she became interested in her condition through a friend of hers. Immediately she went to see her, and when she left she pressed something into the sick girl's hand. It was only after she had gone that the other realised what her caller had left. It was a check for a thousand dollars.

Nor does Mabel wait for the large demand upon her sympathy. Gifts from her come unprovoked as manna. She is likely to go out and buy a hundred-dollar beaded bag for a stenographer in the organization, and just as likely to invest a corresponding amount in remembering somebody whom she has met once and happened to like.

I used to find it very hard to get Mabel to a set when the set was early in the morning. Extras and other members of the cast would have been waiting there for hours. The director would be fuming. At last somebody would be sent to investigate the whereabouts of the missing luminary. More than likely she would be found writing letters in her dressing-room.

"But I don't feel in the humour this morning," she would sometimes say to me, pleadingly. "How can I go down there and act that way?"

My associate, Mr. Abraham Lehr, made frequent attempts to correct this habit of Mabel's. He found himself forever frustrated—indeed disarmed—by the charm of manner, the delightful playfulness which Mabel possesses so abundantly.

Once, I remember, when she was exceptionally tardy, Lehr, met her in the studio with his face fixed in lines of righteous indignation. She approached him with one hand behind her back and the other uplifted in a gesture of the gayest, most irresistible command.

"Wait," cried she, "before you say anything!"

With that she brought forward a new and very beautiful photograph of herself and presented it to him with a curtsey. On the photograph were written these lines:

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
When I'm late
I think of you.

She watched him while he read these words and then, her big brown eyes dancing with merriment, she said coaxingly: "That's the reason I was late, you see. I was thinking up something nice to write on your photograph. I didn't want to say just 'Yours sincerely,' or something stupid like that."

I do not need to say that Lehr's face softened perceptibly or that he forgot all about the judicial rebuke which he had evidently planned. For the pictured collection of stage and screen celebrities which he has had mounted under the glass top of his office-desk represents a hobby, and this contribution of Mabel's still occupies an honoured place in the gallery.

I do not mean for a moment to convey the idea that Miss Normand is an isolated example of tardiness. Many screen favorites heave in sight as slowly as *Lohengrin's* swan. This is particularly true of comedians. Chaplin, for example, often keeps his associates waiting for hours—indeed, there are entire days when he is absolutely unable to work. The fact of it is that the efficiency engineer will never be able to control a picture studio.

Such an expectation is as vain as the belief that

you could obtain a poet's best work by snapping your fingers over him and crying, "Come, come, we want another sonnet and a gross of couplets before lunch." For the best screen acting is naturally inspirational.

True, some performers are able to turn on their emotional faucets at any time. Mary Pickford, as I have related, rings up early every morning. But then she is a systematised human being who presents in temperament the opposite pole from Mabel Normand. The latter is a creature of impulse. She never calculates the moment ahead for fear that the moment itself might calculate something she liked better. When she works she works hard, but she can't do it in step with the hour-hand.

Mabel has a really fine talent and she knows picture-production from every angle. But the screen does not absorb all of her amazing vitality. Eagerly she turns to people, books, gaiety, strange scenes. She does not want to miss one glint of "this dome of many-colored glass."

The difference of degree in the attitude of Mary Pickford to pictures and that of Mabel Normand is indicated by their varying response to European travel. Chaplin once said to a friend of mine, "You know, I was in Paris with Mary and Doug and often they really seemed lost without their pictures." Far from this state of mind, so familiar

in the American business man temporarily implicated with a gondola or a ruined temple, is the eagerness with which Mabel Normand returned last Autumn from her first trip abroad.

"Oh, how I enjoyed every minute of it!" she told me. "Pictures, music, all the funny outdoor cafés, all the funny people!"

She has always been an inveterate reader. This, of course, is at present one of the fashionable claims of the screen star, and in some cases I am obliged to say that the claim rests on very flimsy foundations. Right here, indeed, I feel compelled to anticipate by telling a story illustrative of this point:

One day Charlie Chaplin went with me to a Los Angeles hospital where a friend of mine was recuperating. Left alone in the corridor, he wandered into a little sitting-room. It was filled with books representing the most advanced taste in fiction, poetry, and criticism.

"Whose room is this?" asked Chaplin of the nurse hovering over the scene.

Quite evidently she did not recognise him, for she replied without a vestige of embarrassment, "Oh, this belongs to Mrs. Mildred Harris Chaplin."

Charlie's face underwent a number of changes.

"Oh, indeed? And is she reading these books," he finally inquired.

"Oh, no," returned the nurse in a matter-of-fact tone. "The books she really reads are in a little closet in her bedroom."

Mabel Normand, however, does not regard books merely for their furnishing value. She really gets into action on "literachoor."

Many people who are generous with money and material possessions are not equally so when it comes to that more difficult gift of time and thought. No such limitation exists in Mabel's nature. The thing which makes her beloved is that going out of herself to others, that real love of people irradiating her most casual contact.

Once, I remember, she was eating lunch in the Goldwyn studio restaurant. The apple-pie struck her as being especially successful and she asked to see the cook. A few moments later this functionary, an ample old Irishwoman in a gingham apron and with her sleeves rolled up, appeared behind the counter. Visibly she was overcome with awe at the summons from the brilliant young star. It did not take Mabel long to remove such oppressive sentiments. Only a moment and she had literally vaulted over the counter and had grabbed the astounded old woman in her arms.

"Bless your heart," we heard her cry, "it's the best apple-pie I've had since I left home." And as

she left the scene she tucked one of her inveterate bills into the cook's hand.

Nor is her response to people merely an emotional one. It is practical as well. She keeps a book in which are written the birthdays of all of her friends, and she never fails to react to these dates with a letter, a telegram, or a gift.

It was when she was in the Goldwyn studio that the death of Olive Thomas occurred in Paris. Never have I seen such a passion of pity as Mabel showed for the unfortunate girl, such a passion of indignation as she expressed for those whom she believed responsible for the tragedy. Nor did she stop there. The mother of Olive Thomas was in this country and there was hardly a day when Mabel did not go to see her or take her on a drive or send her some remembrance.

To a nature like this, so alive with human sympathy and understanding, it is easy to forgive much.

There was one person from whom, so I always suspected, Mabel withheld much of her usual kindliness. This was Madge Kennedy. I had engaged the latter actress soon after making my contract with Mabel and the two worked simultaneously, therefore, in the Fort Lee studio. That they did not always work harmoniously is scarcely puzzling, for the fact that they were both comédiennes represented perhaps the only likeness between them.

Indeed, that very similarity constituted in itself a ground for conflict.

They each had the habit of slipping into the projection-room to look at the rushes of the other. And the comment with which they greeted the rival performances became fairly familiar to the studio.

"Hmph," announced Mabel to her group, "she saw me do it and she quickly did it first."

"Hmph," duplicated Madge to her group, "she saw me do it and she quickly did it first!"

Mabel behind the screens is as full of pranks as she is on the screen. Madge Kennedy's professional manner, on the contrary, is decorous to the point of primness.

My contract with Mabel Normand contained one clause providing that she should pay half for the clothes worn in her stories and that the company should pay the other half. Time went by, however, and brought us no bill from the star for our share of her stage wardrobe.

"How's this," I asked her one day.

She looked very much embarrassed. "Well, you see," she replied, "I've ordered so many clothes that I don't feel right about letting you pay anything at all."

It was quite true. She did order lavishly. Instead of buying one hat at a time she bought twelve. With frocks and other accessories it was the same.

To be sure, there are other stars whose expenditures in this direction are equally impressive. Pauline Frederick, for example, once got an exemption of fifty thousand dollars from her income-tax on the basis of an investment of that amount in her wardrobe. I am sure, however, that only a few of this number would have been halted by any such scruples as those revealed by Mabel Normand.

I had the same wardrobe arrangement with Madge Kennedy. In her case, however, developments were slightly different. One day my studio manager came to me in a towering rage.

"See here, Mr. Goldwyn," he began truculently, "Miss Kennedy has been ordering a whole lot of clothes——"

"Sure," interrupted I. "They always are."

"Yes, but she doesn't need them for her picture. She needs them for her Autumn—that's what!"

It was with difficulty that I persuaded him of the fact that Miss Kennedy would never be guilty of such an imposition. Indeed, my success was only temporary. For almost every picture which she made revived this supposition that Madge was ordering more clothes than she needed.

Madge Kennedy was always prompt on the set and was most conscientious in her efforts to do good work. No moods, no sharp edges, obtruded themselves into any business relation with her. I ascribe

this to the regularising influence of a very happy marriage. Obviously she was very much in love with her husband, a young New York business man who frequently drove over to the Fort Lee studio to take her back to town.

From a being so well disciplined as Madge you would expect the relentless care with which she guarded her health. At any party she was apt to go off unseasonably as an alarm-clock. Once, I remember, I invited her to a dinner-party in Los Angeles to meet Mr. and Mrs. Rex Beach. The dinner had just ended and the party had hardly begun when Madge rose to depart.

"What!" exclaimed Pauline Frederick, another of the guests, "you don't mean to say you're going?"

"Oh, yes," replied Madge, "I told Mr. Goldwyn that if I came at all I should have to leave early. You see, I have a call for eight-thirty in the morning all made up."

Pauline looked bewildered. In her mind there was absolutely no connection between early to bed and early to rise. One of those rare people who, like Edison and Bernhardt, thrive on a few hours' sleep, she never took 10 P.M. as anything more serious than the start of an evening. Yet when she appeared in the studio the next morning her eyes were glowing with health, her whole frame snapping with vigour.

The third member of the trio of feminine stars with which I began work in the Goldwyn studio was Mae Marsh. One of the luminaries of whom I have spoken in connection with "The Birth of a Nation," Mae had also played a leading rôle in Griffith's "Intolerance." Both of these performances had inspired me with great confidence in her ability, and I looked forward eagerly to her first Goldwyn venture.

I have spoken of my disappointment when Blanche Sweet, another Griffith product, made her first picture for the Lasky Company. I was doomed to the same experience now with Mae Marsh. She, too, seemed incapable of any notable achievement when removed from the galvanising influence of Griffith. To be sure, her Goldwyn pictures were not failures, but comment on these pictures usually failed of any reference to Mae Marsh.

Take, for example, "Polly of the Circus," the first vehicle we provided for her. People spoke highly of the story, but Mae's work in it created no flurry of excitement. I was not, however, discouraged by this initial experience, for it often happens that the very story which you suppose exactly adapted to a performer's personality fails to evolve her best. So it was with unimpaired belief in her more sensational possibilities that I made preparations for "The Cinderella Man." These

included the engagement of George Loan Tucker, the celebrated director of "The Miracle Man." Here again Mae failed to strike twelve. For the comedy which brought Tom Moore's acting into such bold relief again evoked only lukewarm appreciation of its star, Mae Marsh.

I can not say that Mae's presence in the studio was invariably a sunny one. She had a habit of balking at something which the director suggested, and the terms of her objection were always the same.

"Oh," she would say rather scornfully, "that isn't at all what Mr. Griffith would do. He would do so-and-so."

Naturally such continued harping upon the one standard of artistic merit did not exactly enlist the sympathy of the director thus reminded of his limitations. Friction marked all subsequent relations between the two.

There was one type of service in the Goldwyn studios which did inspire her admiration. It was the thing removed from her own special sphere of activity. She always liked the director assigned to the other stars. She had a corresponding esteem for their stories.

Right here I wish to introduce one of the thorny elements of any film-producer's life. First of all, he buys at the advice of his editorial staff some par-

ticular story. The purchase is made, of course, with some one star in mind. But when the story is submitted to that star there is hardly a chance in a hundred that she will like it. Sometimes she may be convinced of its merits. In other cases she remains obdurate. Either termination involves, of course, precious time and money.

Mae Marsh was not, as I shall establish later, distinguished by her captiousness in this regard. But she was exceedingly able in the performance of rejecting scenarios.

"I don't like this—it doesn't suit me," she would report after reading something our editorial department had just bought for her. We would then concede a new scenario, only to have it dismissed in the same arbitrary fashion.

In this way weeks went by, weeks during which of course her salary of more than several thousands was being regularly paid to her. Was it any wonder that I began to feel uneasy as a man who sees his meter jumping while his cab remains perfectly motionless?

In the beginning of these reminiscences of mine I said that it was always the far horizon which had haunted me. While I was with the Lasky Company I had tried always to march in its direction. Now that I was head of the Goldwyn Company I was determined upon really catching

up with it. Far from limiting myself to those who, like Mabel Normand and Mae Marsh, were representative screen stars, I reached out toward the far lights of opera and the legitimate drama. To draw to the screen the most finished histrionic ability, the names of deepest import in the world of art—to this ambition may be traced the great disasters of my professional career.

Chapter Ten

THE MAGIC OF MARY GARDEN

WHILE I was still with the Lasky Company I had been attracted by the reputation of Mary Garden, the most consummate of "singing actresses" (I borrow the phrase from that famous musical critic, H. T. Parker of Boston), and at the beginning of the War I wired our London representative to see her. She was then in Scotland, where she was connected with a hospital for war-relief, and all efforts of our organisation to interest her in pictures failed absolutely. She refused to leave her humanitarian work. When, however, two or three years after this she came to America to sing in opera, I was prompt to get in touch with her.

My first talk with the celebrated artiste was at her apartment at the Ritz. As she swept in upon me I remember thinking that she looked even taller than she does on the stage. With her clear blue eyes and her finely modelled features and her heroic mould, a real Valkyr! Not for one moment did she suggest any of those rôles to which her exquisite

art lends itself. *Thais, Melisande, Louise, Le Jongleur*—I thought of these and was bewildered. I had never realised before how completely the mind can transpose the entire meaning of a face.

Here in her apartment away from the footlights Miss Garden's countenance expressed a keen intelligence directed toward the problems of the day. For a long time we talked about the War, and I was amazed at her grasp of every industrial and economic phase of the conflict. Her wide range of information, together with the vivid, forceful phrases in which she expressed it—these made it hard for me to realise that I was really talking to a prima donna, she who even in her business transactions is supposed to distil an atmosphere of feminine romance and caprice. If I had heard Miss Garden that evening without knowing who it was I should have thought I was listening to some keen-witted, able woman journalist.

So engrossed were we both in the impersonal that it was at least an hour before I attacked the real purpose of my call. When I finally broached the subjects of pictures I told her, of course, how eager the Goldwyn Company was for the honour of first presenting her on the screen. She responded to this tribute very graciously. There was quite evidently not one moment's doubt on her part that she could do pictures. Her only misgiving, frankly revealed,

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Whispering gossip in Mr. Goldwyn's ears

WILL ROGERS BIDS PAULINE FREDERICK GOODBYE

As she leaves Culver City, California, for a vacation in New York.

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was that I might not pay her enough to justify her in making them.

I must say that for some time I, too, shared this misgiving. For the sum on which she stood firm was a hundred and fifty thousand dollars for ten weeks' work.

However, a discussion of the matter with my associates, Edgar Selwyn, Arthur Hopkins, and Margaret Mayo, brought out the fact that they were all in favour of engaging her even at that sum. I took their advice, and, triumphantly conscious that I was taking Miss Garden from the numerous other film-producers who had been competing for her services, I signed my name to the enormous contract. The news that Mary Garden was at last to appear in pictures created a sensation throughout the country and, as the newspapers carried the story in big type, the Goldwyn Company profited by an enviable publicity. Seeing the importance attached to her appearance, I grew more and more hopeful that in the celebrated operatic star I was going to offset the various hardships attending my foundation of the Goldwyn Company.

Naturally it was "Thais," the most widely known of her operatic rôles, which suggested itself as her first vehicle. This story, although uncopyrighted in America, obligated the purchase of foreign rights, and I paid M. Anatole France, its author, ten thou-

sand dollars for these. In so doing I felt sure that the French exhibitors alone would more than return my expenditure. Just how little this belief was realised is brought out by the conclusion of this episode.

No sooner had the actual production of "Thais" begun than I was beset by grave fears. Miss Garden, feeling rightfully that her operatic presentation of the rôle was authoritative, did not recognise the difference of medium involved, and her first days on the set showed her, as the studio people expressed it, "acting all over the place." That which was art in opera was not art on the screen, where the secret of achievement is emotional restraint. Watch Charlie Chaplin, the great exponent of motion-picture art, and you will see that he gets his effects by suggesting rather than by presenting an emotion.

Those days when we were producing "Thais" remain with me as among the most troubled of my history. Harassed by financial adjustments and by production difficulties, assailed by complaints of scenarios and directors from my various stars, I now had this supreme anxiety regarding the outcome of my enormous investment in Mary Garden. Indeed, I was constantly called upon to mediate between the singer and her director.

The death of "Thais" was almost the death of

Mary Garden. She had fought bitterly the scenario's departure from the original text here in this scene. She asserted that the screen version, presenting as it did the triumph of *Thais,* the woman, over *Thais,* the saint, was an intolerable falsification. And she could, indeed, hardly be persuaded to act in it at all.

When she saw the rushes of this scene, which so violated her artistic conception, her rage and grief knew no bounds. "I knew it!" she cried. "Oh, I knew it! Imagine me, the great *Thais,* dying like an acrobat!"

A moment later she rushed from the projection-room down to the office. Here she found Margaret Mayo. "Did you see it," she stormed to this other woman. "That terrible thing? Did you see the way they made me die? Imagine a saint dying like that!"

The actress looked her up and down and then she responded in a tone of studied insolence, "You would have a hard time, Miss Garden, proving to any one that you were a saint."

Some time later when I came up on the set I found Miss Garden weeping hysterically. "Oh," said she, "that terrible woman! Have you heard what she just said to me."

Miss Garden never forgave this gratuitous insult.

At last, after such stormy sessions, "Thais" was

completed. The finished picture was not reassuring. But, even though I recognised its shortcomings, I still hoped that Mary Garden's name would carry the production to triumph. If it went over it meant a lift from the deep trough of the sea in which the Goldwyn Company had been weltering. If it failed—but I did not dare allow myself to dwell upon this.

With the full sense of that evening's significance, I went to the opening of "Thais" at the Strand Theatre in New York. A woman friend of mine went with me and as we walked out of the theatre her face told me everything. "Oh," she said, her eyes filling with tears, "I just hate to tell you—knowing how much it means to you—but—well, you can see for yourself how they took it."

I had indeed seen it—the heart-breaking coldness with which that first New York audience had received the picture on which I had staked so much. Even then, however, I did not realise the enormity of the failure. I did this only when a day or so later telegrams began pouring in from cities all over the country where "Thais" had appeared simultaneously with New York. These telegrams rendered, with few exceptions, the same verdict as the metropolis. Nor were foreign countries more enthusiastic.

Miss Garden herself was quite as overwhelmed

by this failure as was the company. It had certainly been through no lack of diligence on her part that the story went as it did, for she had arrived at the studio early each morning and was often the last to leave it.

Certainly we were most unwise in selecting for her first picture a story in which her operatic tradition was so ingrained. This was brought out by the comparative success of her second film, "The Splendid Sinner." Had this only been produced first we should have done on it three or four times the business which we actually did. As it was, "Thais" had been such a complete "flop" that exhibitors had their fingers crossed when it came to Mary Garden.

The Garden experience cost the Goldwyn Company heavily. Disastrous as it was, however, it did not compare with the two-hundred-and-fifty-thousand-dollar contract which the Famous Players-Lasky organization made with the late Caruso. I was at Graumann's Theatre in Los Angeles when the first of the two pictures involved in this contract was released, and its reception was even more virulent than that accorded "Thais." After playing two days it was, in fact, hissed off the stage. What was more, this experience was echoed all over the country. Nor was a rival's venture with the beautiful Lina Cavalieri more productive of confidence in

the wisdom of transplanting the operatic star to the screen firmament.

Aside from the unfamiliarity of the stage and operatic star with the medium of motion-pictures, a difficulty enhanced by the arrogance with which they usually approach the new field, there is another fundamental obstruction in the path of the film-producer who exploits them. Although their names may be on the lips of every inhabitant of a large city, many a small town knows them not. Main Street, which counts enormously in pictures, is apt to be much more familiar with some comparatively obscure film actress than with Farrar or Garden. This fact was brought home to me when, some months after signing my contract with Miss Garden, I was talking with a small-town exhibitor who had come with his lawyer to see me about signing a contract for Goldwyn films.

"Ah," remarked the lawyer, looking at some photographs on my desk, "I see you have engaged Mary Garden. That ought to be a great card."

"Mary Garden!" exclaimed the exhibitor at this point. "Why, what's new about her. I showed her five years ago and charged five cents admission." Evidently he had confused the prima donna with Mary Gardner, a screen actress.

One of the incidents which stands out from that Winter in the Fort Lee studio was the meeting

which I effected between Mary Garden and Geraldine Farrar. The two rivals had never been introduced. But neither apparently had found acquaintance necessary to the formation of a firm opinion. In the days when Miss Farrar used to be working in the Lasky studio I would sometimes talk to her while De Mille was taking other scenes. The conversation usually drifted toward people, and its current bore us almost inevitably to Mary Garden. It was quite patent, however, that the fascination which this theme seemed to possess for Geraldine was that of professional rivalry, which always exists, and the greater the prima donnas the more vehement the feeling.

When I came to meet Miss Garden I found the sentiment strikingly reciprocal. Yet on that famous day when I brought Miss Farrar over to the Fort Lee studio to meet her rival I wish that the world might have shared with me the effusiveness of that greeting. Never were two women more glad to see each other. The affectionate cadences of their voices, the profound appreciation of the privilege of this moment expressed by each—these ended at last in a farewell kiss. But the kiss, I discovered later, had worked no psychological change. Both felt exactly the same after the meeting as they had before.

My experience with Miss Garden was costly. It

was not, however, so ill-fated as was the Goldwyn Company's engagement of Maxine Elliott.

With this episode I shall begin my next chapter and shall follow it with the story of Pauline Frederick, the Goldwyn Company's engagement of Geraldine Farrar, and with my memories of Charlie Chaplin.

Chapter Eleven

MAXINE ELLIOTT AND PAULINE FREDERICK

IT WAS one day just after the Goldwyn Company's inception that Arch Selwyn and Roi Cooper Megrue came to me in great excitement. "Maxine Elliott's arriving to-morrow from England," announced Megrue.

"Yes, Sam," added Selwyn, "and we think it would be a great thing if you signed up with her. Right this minute the Shuberts are after her for pictures."

When, a few days later, Miss Elliott came to my office I thought I had never seen a human being more radiantly lovely. When I considered, too, that in addition to this glorious beauty she had a reputation for these looks in every hamlet in America, the one anxiety which assailed me was, Can I possibly get her away from the other fellow, As a matter of fact, I did secure her only after long arduous negotiations.

Never was a picture surrounded by more care than Miss Elliott's first production. Irvin Cobb and Roi Cooper Megrue wrote the story. Both

names should have assured the excellence of the vehicle, Alan Dwan, one of our most celebrated directors, assumed charge of the production. Hugo Ballin, the portrait-painter, designed the sets. In spite of all this perfection of detail, "Fighting Odds" was an abject failure. Never, indeed, was any Goldwyn film criticised so ferociously as this. Not only did we lose on the picture itself, but the "flop" was so conspicuous that it resulted in the cancellation of other pictures of ours.

All this was far from heartening to further performance, yet in the midst of the storm called forth by her first picture Miss Elliott was busy on her second. She was now under the direction of Arthur Hopkins, who, although he had been studying studio methods for some months, had never before assumed full sway of a production. Probably nothing on the screen was more amusing than that inner drama of inexperience and bewilderment revealed in the making of this second picture.

One day Miss Elliott, her throat swathed in yards of tulle—a protective measure of which she, like Bernhardt, often availed herself—was wheeling around and around on the set.

"Good gracious!" whispered somebody impishly as she looked at this futile and pathetic whirling of the statuesque woman, "isn't she ever going to run down?"

Poor Miss Elliott, she evidently didn't know what to do when she stopped turning! And I doubt if Mr. Hopkins was more inspired!

At this point the reader may wonder why I, a producer of experience, would confide so much in two people who had so little screen experience. The answer to this is that I have always wanted to enrich motion-pictures by assured talent from outside fields. This involved experimentation, and it was natural that a few of my experiments should fail. Others, on the contrary, have proved the wisdom of bringing in new blood.

That Mr. Hopkins, a theatrical producer of such merit and reputation, did not justify my selection of him was due to his indifference to the new environment. He never regarded pictures seriously, and after directing the Maxine Elliott story he came to me and told me that he could not get his mind sufficiently detached from the stage ever to be successful in a studio.

A beauty of the stage with whom I had a more fortuitous contact was Pauline Frederick. Miss Frederick was with Zukor when I founded the Goldwyn Company. That she transferred to me was due to her husband, Willard Mack, the playwright and actor. Coming up to me one night at the Directors' Ball at the Biltmore, he said:

"See here, Sam, Polly's contract with Famous is

just about to expire. How about it, anyway? Now I'd like to see her go with you, for you're a young company and I'm sure you would take a bigger interest in her."

I fell in immediately with this line of thought, and some evenings later he phoned me to see him at the Lyceum Theatre, where he was then appearing with Lenore Ulric in "Tiger Rose." When I got to his dressing-room I found Miss Frederick there. Together we three discussed the possibility of the star's transference to the Goldwyn Company, and after some weeks of conference the possibility crystallised into a fact.

Needless to say, Mr. Zukor did not take the news of her deflection any too kindly. For at this time Miss Frederick's large American following was reinforced by great popularity in other countries. In England, for example, she was as much of a drawing-card as was Mary Pickford. In his irritation at her loss it was, I suppose, quite natural for my competitor's sentiment to overflow to me. Normal or not, it certainly did so. Meeting me at a ball soon after the news of the contract came out, Mr. Zukor began overwhelming me with reproaches for my treacherous conduct in weaning his star away from him. In vain I explained that the advance had been made from her side, not from mine. He refused to believe me. Finally the

discussion became so heated that Alice Joyce came running over to us.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen!" said she laughingly, "I don't know anything in the world worth so much discussion—especially a motion-picture star!"

At this time we were just on the point of moving our studio from Fort Lee to California. This involved, of course, moving Miss Frederick. A gentle theory this, but its execution threatened danger. For Miss Frederick was devotedly attached to her husband and he was playing in New York.

I am not overrating the emotional pressure of this situation. Compared to Pauline Frederick Mrs. Micawber gave a wavering brand of devotion. She never would desert Mr. Mack—not for an hour. I have related that the first time I talked to her regarding a change, I found her in her husband's dressing-room. This was no coincidence. It was a habit. After working hard all day on the set, she spent every evening back of the scenes with Mack.

In consideration of such strongly marked feeling on her part I obviously was compelled to do something about Mack. The fact of it is that, far from wanting him on the basis of agreeable surroundings for his wife, I was most anxious to shift him from theatrical work to our organisation. A playwright

of skill, an actor of experience—why should I not have supposed that he would be a valuable addition to the Goldwyn Company?

The position which I offered him finally was head of the scenario department. Although he was making more on the stage, he accepted my appointment at five hundred dollars a week, for the salary was accompanied by the promise that if he made good I would raise his salary and give him a long-term contract. He started his new duties in the Fort Lee studio and they were achieved so satisfactorily that we transferred him together with his wife to the California establishment. Thereby hangs a tale.

In the old days when Zukor and I used to exchange confidences regarding our respective disagreements with various screen performers, he was always emphatic in his praise of Pauline Frederick. "Now, there's a girl that anybody could get along with," he would say. "Easy to handle, likes her stories, always on time on the set." So consistent were his comments on the model star that I looked forward to Miss Frederick's presence in my studio much as does a motorist to a stretch of glossy asphalt after innumerable rough detours.

Alas for such expectations! By the time that "teacher's pet" reached me she had begun to share some of the characteristics of less exemplary performers. That this was so may be traced chiefly

to her husband's position in the studio. For it was on the question of scenarios that I found her most captious.

"I don't like this story!" she would say to me after reading something that I had considered especially suited to her.

"What don't you like about it?"

She was always able to assign a reason, but underneath this alleged objection I discovered gradually the vital source of prejudice. The rejected scenario had not been written by Willard Mack!

There was, too, another cause for the beautiful star's departure from that ideal course of conduct hymned by Zukor. In the Summer following my formation of the Goldwyn Company I had engaged Geraldine Farrar. The latter and Pauline Frederick met in the Fort Lee studio. From that time forth the business of picture-production became more complicated.

"Of course," Miss Frederick would say, "this story is nothing so good as the one you've given Geraldine Farrar."

Miss Farrar, on the other hand, seemed to assume that Mack's position in the editorial department gave Pauline a decided advantage in the choice of scenarios. Between two such fixed and divergent view-points there was only one course to steer. This was a Machiavellian one.

"I don't like this story," began Pauline one day.

"Very well," retorted I equably, "we'll give it to Miss Farrar. She wants it badly."

Mysteriously, magically, these words seemed to overcome my star's objections. She not only took the story, but ran away with it.

Meeting with such marked success in one direction, I was encouraged to extend the application of my guileful principle. The very next story, I showed Miss Farrar I accompanied with the confidence that Pauline Frederick was crazy to get it. Magic again! Here was the one scenario at which my prima donna never demurred.

The passage of time has enabled me to smile at such incidents. Then, however, I was less susceptible to the humour of the situation. This was hardly strange. For here was I attempting to do a big, constructive piece of work and at every turn I was met by trivial jealousies, trivial obstructions.

The worst of it is that the star's warfare against a scenario does not end the struggle. Once he or she has been persuaded of its merits the director is next called in. Often, of course, this personage thinks that the one obstacle in his career of authorship is lack of time. Consequently when the drama is put into his hands he starts to rewrite it. The result is that before long star, director, and editorial department are embroiled in a long and

bitter conflict. Naturally, in these days of which I am speaking the case was appealed to me by each of the combatants.

The wear and tear of all this are felt by the scenario as well as by the producer. Is it any wonder that of the original story bought by the editorial department, perhaps one idea survives the general assault? For by the time that you have wheedled your actress into accepting "Mary Had a Little Lamb" the director decides that a goat possesses infinitely greater revenues of humour. Then the editorial department, conceding the goat, insists on an alteration in the type of heroine. She becomes "Hildegarde, the girl with a punch." After this everybody thinks up so much business for the goat while he is on the road that, of course, he never gets to school at all. He probably lands at Coney Island or, better still, in the lobby of a fashionable hotel. Of one thing at least you may be certain: the terminus will be some place where Hildegarde can wear all her latest Paris gowns and wraps.

If I had really submitted "Mary Had a Little Lamb" to some of my stars I think it would have been accepted more readily than many more mature dramas. For Mary was very young, and if there is one thing upon which the average screen performer insists it is a youthful part. In real life she herself may be the mother of an eighteen-year-

old girl. No matter! On the screen she must appear "teenful."

I remember one such experience in connection with Pauline Frederick. She had read a story in which she was very anxious to appear. The heroine of that story was a girl in her teens. Mr. Lehr had a long talk with her in which, as gently and diplomatically as was possible, he pointed out that such an extremely youthful rôle would accentuate rather than diminish the discrepancy between her own age—not that this was formidable—and that of the screen heroine. She looked a little crestfallen at first. Then with a very sweet smile she yielded.

"Ah, well," she sighed, "I suppose you're right!"

One of the most amusing bases of rivalry in my studio was that of orchestral accompaniment. A word of explanation is required at this point. When Miss Farrar first came to make pictures for the Lasky Company we provided a small orchestra for her inspiration on the set. This unprecedented luxury, now an almost universal feature behind the screen, was thereupon exacted by other performers. Furthermore some of them did very accurate bookkeeping on the subject.

One day Pauline came to me with a very injured expression. "I'm not pleased!" announced she.

I believe I managed to act as if I were meeting

an entirely fresh situation. "Well, well," asked I, "what's the trouble now?"

"Why, it's this: How can you expect me to do my best work—I ask you—how can you expect it? I have only one violin—one poor little violin——"

"But, Miss Frederick," I interrupted her, "you had no music at all while you were with Zukor. How about that? Yet you were doing your best work there."

She reflected for a moment, and I saw then that I had not reached the root of the matter. This was quite evidently the fact that Geraldine Farrar had two or three violins. I tried to point out that the latter's operatic tradition demanded this excess of string stimulation, but I was not successful. The number of pieces each actress should have became, in fact, one of those absurd bones of contention on which I, as a producer, was compelled to throw away much vital energy. Finally my studio became a three-ring band. When I entered it in the morning I wandered from the jazz selections which were toning up Mabel Normand's comedy to the realm where sad waltzes deepened Pauline Frederick's emotional fervour. The circle was surrounded by the classic themes infolding Geraldine Farrar. It was hardly strange that outsiders used to gather every day to share in these free airs.

When not guarding her studio rights Miss

Frederick is the most delightful of women. I have told in a previous chapter of her gift of getting along with only a few hours' sleep. This same vitality sparkles in every look of her eyes, in every sentence she utters. It leads her to a deep interest in literature—she is one of the best-read women I have ever known—and to a hundred phases of human activities outside her own province. Altogether, a magnetic and bracing and colourful human being!

Chapter Twelve

A MARRIAGE OF TWO MINDS

WHILE I was having difficulties with Pauline Frederick I was not enjoying an untroubled business relationship with the star whose supposed advantage she so much resented. Earlier in my story I have told of how Geraldine Farrar's first invasion of our field brought to our ears nothing but delighted comments on her director, her stories, and her general environment. Sadly I am now compelled to ascribe this first fine, careless rapture to her inexperience in pictures. For when she came to work for the Goldwyn Company she had acquired enough information about the screen to make her critical of stories, directorship, and various other production details.

Now, too, a personal element in her life contributed to her attitude toward pictures. For since she worked on the Lasky lot she had married Lou Tellegen.

At the same time that Pauline Frederick was discontented with any scenario not written by Willard

Mack, Geraldine Farrar was discontented with any leading man who was not Lou Tellegen.

The second Summer of her engagement with us we deferred to this longing. We brought Mr. Tellegen on to play with his wife. He did more than that. He frequently played against her.

About this time, I believe Mr. Howard Dietz, the brilliant young chief of my publicity department, gave out an interview with Tellegen to the effect that he was delighted to be back in pictures, particularly when under such ideal conditions and when they afforded him the opportunity of playing with Miss Farrar, who "was as excellent an artiste as she was a wife." This sentiment warranted a smile from those who saw how he embraced that privilege.

To be concrete: While they were playing together on a set Tellegen would frequently try to arrogate to himself the most advantageous focussing of the camera.

He was apt to become sulky if this campaign was frustrated, and, seeing this, we hit at last upon a harmless method of humouring him.

"Take him that way," we whispered to the director, "and then we'll throw away the negatives. The ones we'll keep will be those where Farrar is played up."

He was almost equally insatiable of "close-ups." "You haven't made a single one of me yet," he

would complain after a careful computation of his wife's advantages in this respect.

And she, the beautiful Farrar, hitherto so much the conqueror in love—did she realise the rivalry, the antagonism back of these efforts? She certainly did. Time and again she tried to bring him into the conspicuous position he so much desired. When she failed her look was all for the pain of his hurt, not for that which she might so reasonably have felt at such an attitude on the part of a beloved human being.

Tellegen did not seem much more appreciative of her off the set. Often when they were lunching together, for example, you overheard some teasing reference on his part to the fact that she was some years older than he. She never replied angrily to such remarks. Indeed, the general criticism of her behaviour was that she was entirely too nice for him.

"Watch him! He's as sure of her as he is of the ice-man coming around. Why doesn't she make him wonder a little?" So remarked one of a group watching the famous pair as they sat together one day in the studio café. The objection was well taken. Geraldine was bending toward her husband with her accustomed look of rapt absorption. She was talking to him eagerly with a frequent flash of the perfect white teeth. He, on his part, was silent,

absent-minded, even a little sulky. When he answered her at all it was in monosyllables.

Time and again, in fact, studio folks beheld this metamorphosis of the romantic and ardent lover of another California Summer into the indifferent husband of this. And when it came time for the great prima donna to leave, what a saddening contrast to that former day when Tellegen had run madly beside the train bearing his love toward the East! A recent Summer Miss Farrar stood beside her special train. The fourteen personal attendants she had brought with her were running hither and thither with her baggage and possessions. She, however, seemed to know nothing of what was going on around her. For Lou Tellegen stood before her, and she was looking into his eyes.

At last, just before the train started, she threw her arms about him. All her dread of separation was in that embrace. You could see what it meant to her to leave him even for a few weeks. And he? Listlessly, with hardly one responsive gesture, he stood encircled by his wife's arms.

Yet such apparent indifference never seemed to quench the fire kindled by that first glance of Tellegen's on the Lasky lot. It was almost unbelievable—the reckless lengths to which she, this careful, methodical business woman, was driven by one despotic emotion. I am giving now what was

perhaps her most tempestuous departure from usual standards.

During her second Summer with the Goldwyn Company, she had insisted that her husband's name appear on the bill-boards in connection with her own. For some reason, however, the requested mention of Tellegen did not appear. When Farrar became aware of this omission, what did she do but take an automobile all through Los Angeles and tear down with her own hands every offending poster. I admit that I was infuriated. She, when I called her up over the phone, was scarcely more serene, and for some time it was a case of Farrar *versus* Goldwyn.

At this moment she was in the midst of a second picture, and she made prompt use of that advantage. "Very well," she threatened, "if you will not feature Mr. Tellegen's name I am going to stop work right in the middle of this new picture!"

"All right," retorted I, "you do that and I am going to show the first part of the picture and then announce on the screen that at this point Madame Farrar would not proceed because the producer did not feature Lou Tellegen's name."

Lost to all consideration of business values as she then seemed, this threat succeeded. She went on with her story.

Strange is the parallel experience of those two

rivals of the Goldwyn studio, Geraldine Farrar and Pauline Frederick. For each is now separated from the man for whom she once so turbulently set aside her own interests. Nor does the parallel stop there. Lou Tellegen was at the very most only a moderate film success. The good looks which first caused such a flurry among the feminine portions of his stage audiences never carried well on the screen. Likewise, in a different sphere, Willard Mack failed to live up to his stage tradition. His stories were never really good picture material, and to Pauline Frederick's insistence upon appearing in them I ascribe the fact that her Goldwyn dramas were not so successful as those made by Mr. Zukor.

She herself slowly awoke to such realisation. In those California days when her New York romance with Mack was beginning to ebb—and it did ebb rapidly—she saw her mistake. But it was then a little too late.

My memories of the great Metropolitan opera-singer close with the year 1919 in a way that reveals the bigness, the sweep of mind and spirit that distinguish Geraldine Farrar. At this time I had a contract with her providing a salary of one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars for twelve weeks of annual service. The contract had still two more years to run when, very regretfully, I went to Miss Farrar and asked if she did not think it might be

better to stay off the screen for a year. Gently as I could do so I added that very often a star's popularity went under a temporary eclipse and that a limited absence from films did much to restore the public demand.

The reason back of this difficult approach was, of course, that lately her pictures had not been drawing. She was prompt to perceive my meaning, and with head up she took it.

"Very well!" said she promptly in her familiar tones that are both flowering and incisive. "Only don't you think that perhaps it would be better to quit entirely? If you think so, say so, Mr. Goldwyn, and we'll tear up the contract now and here."

It was hard to tell her, but I did, that I thought this course might be wiser for us both. Thereupon, without another word and with the most gallant look in the world, she destroyed the contract which meant two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

Of course she saw that it was infinitely better to be remembered by the pictures of her prime than to go on to a lustreless close. Here was another evidence of that reliable business judgment which nothing but her infatuation for Tellegen ever dimmed. But even though self-interest might have pointed to this conclusion, her utter lack of resentment, her failure to voice a single reproach of me,

made this an experience absolutely unique in my career.

My valedictory regarding Madame Farrar is that her word is as good as her bond. This characteristic fits in with that business morality which makes her hate to lose a single hour of her time. I never knew anybody with a keener sense of responsibility to the clock. When she first came to make pictures with the Lasky Company we provided her with a room in the studio where she could practice her music. The Goldwyn Company made the same provision for her. In this way she utilized the long waits between sets.

More than this. Every day of her time was so arranged months beforehand that not a break occurred in the links of industry. On the day that she stopped grand opera she started to make records for mechanical players; from her records she went straight to California, and the day that she returned from California she went on a concert tour. This programme went on for years.

I have already indicated that the prima donna's last pictures were not a financial success. Fully conscious of the surprise that this later information may create in the minds of many people, I am going to add that even her first films, executed when she was in the prime of her beauty and at the height of her operatic fame, were not dazzlingly remuner-

ative. Her "Joan the Woman," a great artistic achievement, brought no commensurate financial returns. The fact of it is that Geraldine Farrar's chief value to the picture-producer lay in the publicity she brought rather than in the films she sold.

Not for a moment does this fact reflect upon the great Farrar. If reflection there be at all, it is upon the small town where, as I have asserted, some obscure little motion-picture actress may have a following which the world's greatest singer can never hope to enroll. I can not emphasise this point too strongly.

Chapter Thirteen

THE REAL CHAPLIN

ALTHOUGH I had heard much of Charlie Chaplin from various friends we shared in common I did not meet him until after I had been in the industry for two years. That first sight of him surprised me as much as it always does those who know only the familiar comedian of the black moustache and baggy trousers. A slender fellow; smooth-shaven; waves of crisp black hair; dark blue eyes that have that peculiar smoky quality of the Autumn hills—here is the catalogue of his outward self. But of course you can not compress into a catalogue the charm of his face. There is a charm there—even beauty. In this connection, indeed, I remember Chaplin's telling me laughingly that his mother once protested indignantly at his make-up.

"Why do you want to make yourself look hideous," said she, "you who are so beautiful?"

But although his contours are satisfactory and his eyes exceedingly handsome, the real interest of Chaplin's face lies in its perpetual and sensitive ab-

sorptions. He seems always listening. Even when he is talking most animatedly he is watching you, wondering about you, quite evidently trying to fit you and your words into some pattern. When you yourself are talking, you get the full force of this vivid listening.

Mack Sennett has often spoken about this characteristic message of his face as it was revealed to him during Chaplin's first studio days. "He'd sit there for hours," records Mack, "just staring at people. I couldn't make out what he was thinking about."

Since that first meeting of ours acquaintance has developed into a friendship which I certainly count one of the privileges of my life. From that friendship it is hard to detach myself for an objective survey of the gifted pantomimist. Even had I not been so close to him I should find formidable the task of analysis. For Chaplin is a maze of contradictions, and no sooner have you affixed to him any one attribute than lo, the next moment has swept it away!

Chaplin loves power—as no one else whom I have ever met he loves it. Money contributes to this sense. Therefore he sticks out for his large contract and therefore he saves a great deal of his earnings. But it affords him just as much consciousness of power to think that he, Chaplin, can

afford to walk away from those assembled actors and stage-hands. Ergo, he does that.

I have often been asked if Chaplin is amusing when away from the screen. He is—thoroughly so. His mimicry is delightful. His dancing is perhaps even more so. To see Chaplin improvising a London street scene with William de Mille; to hear him deliver the speech of a Jewish manufacturer at a banquet where he had been presented with a loving-cup; to watch his imitations of some fashionable rhythmic dancer—at one of these last performances he carried a cuspidor as a Greek vase and concluded by deftly catching it in the crook of his knee—such are the memories of Charlie treasured by those who know him.

I always like to think of the day when he got back from Europe. He came straightway to my office to see me, and I never heard anything so infectious as those descriptions of his triumphal tour. When he came to the story of his decoration with the Legion of Honour he reached a high peak in that imitative narrative of which he is such a perfect master.

Yet here again you are faced by another of those contrasts which bewilder the biographer. There are certain days when, instead of drollery and pungent narrative, he presents a well of unfathomable silence. On such days he runs away from his studio

CHARLIE CHAPLIN

The foremost figure of the entertainment world.
The best known of all artists.

RUPERT HUGHES
Now as ardent a screen director as he is an author.

and from everybody. For hours he will sit motionless in his room. Or perhaps, starting off alone, he will wander into an orange-grove or tramp through the hills around Hollywood.

He suffers at such times—undoubtedly. But make no mistake. The blackness of the universe, the torturing puzzle of existence, which sometimes engulf so many of us, are never repudiated by Chaplin. He does not desire madly to lose himself in somebody or something apart from his own life. He would not in his most tortured moment shift places with the merriest. No, for the blackness is his blackness. And what he wants is experience, no matter whether that be happiness or pain. This hunger for a high measure of sensation is found in his horror of old age. With a kind of fierce rebellion he looks into a neighbouring glass at the streaks of grey in his hair. "Ugh!" he will shiver. "To think the time is coming when I shan't be young any more!"

His reaction to life is, you see, intensely personal, intensely emotional. Nothing is more persuasive of this than is his interest in certain impersonal topics. Chaplin loves to talk about government and economics and religion. Mention of a new "ism" or "ology" brings him loping from the farthest corner of a room. When Rupert Hughes came out to Hollywood he and Charlie were much given

to what somebody calls "topics—just topics." Nothing could have been more illuminating. While Hughes conducted his side of the discussion in a spirit of dispassionate inquiry, the less scientifically trained mind of the comedian struck out with a poet's frenzy at everything which he did not like. One could see it was not really abstract truth which he desired. It was the theory which most successfully represented his own prejudice.

His prejudice is against anything which interferes with his own personal freedom. The censor, the income tax, any supposed obstruction—these are hateful to him in the degree to which they infringe upon that coveted sense of power.

One day when I first came to know Chaplin well, he was with me in my apartment at a Hollywood hotel. While we were talking the telephone rang. Charlie looked terrified.

"What do they want you for?" I asked exceedingly amused.

"A guest," he answered with a grin. "Mrs. X—— asked me for dinner to-night. I promised I'd be there and then found out she had asked a whole lot of people. So you won't catch me going."

This was my introduction to Charlie's most notorious social failing. Often thereafter I witnessed his struggles against being taken into custody. Less frequently I was one of a group of

indignant people waiting for a Chaplin who had promised to come and never did show up at all.

Not long ago a friend of mine asked him why he so hated to make or keep an engagement.

"I don't know," answered Charlie. "I suppose, though, it's because I hate to feel that I have to do anything at a certain time. It just destroys my pleasure in doing it."

At this my friend suggested, "Ah, Mr. Chaplin, but don't you think that is because 'way down deep you don't feel quite free? The person who is conscious of real freedom doesn't fret at any such superficial bondage."

He looked at her eagerly, delightedly—just as he always does when confronted by a new theory. "Why, I never thought of that, but I believe it's true," he assented. "You see," he added, "when I was a young boy I never was free. I was always the one who had to stay at home. My brother Sydney didn't hang around as I did. He went off to Australia."

Then for the first time I suspected what was responsble for Charlie's love of power. Those early years of his in London when, the son of poor vaudeville artists, he experienced hunger and tragedy and the constant terror of the next day, have driven far into his brain. No prosperity can quite rid him of fear. That is why he wants to assure

himself in every way of his present strength. For what is it but fear which makes a man conscious always of the thickness of his armour, the sharpness of his weapons?

There was one engagement of his which Charlie did keep. When Claire Sheridan, the English sculptress, came to California she expressed immediately a desire to meet Chaplin. My friend Abram Lehr thereupon invited the comedian to a dinner given for the handsome author of "From Mayfair to Moscow."

"And don't you dare fail me this time!" admonished Mr. Lehr as he proffered the invitation.

Charlie not only obeyed; he obeyed in a dinner-coat. From the first, so Lehr reports, the two seemed entirely satisfied with each other, and that occasion led to the friendship upon which Mrs. Sheridan dwells so glowingly in her "American Diary."

Charlie is well liked by the average woman. Indeed, most people are attracted to him. Why should they not be? His drollery, his quick and vivid response to the moment, his friendly, boyish smile, the manner which makes you feel at first meeting as if you had known him all your life—these would lead the usual person to pick him out in a roomful of distinguished people. And all this quite apart from the glamour of his reputation.

He makes another appeal. The first time I ever met him I felt sorry for him. The humour of it, that I should want to help him—this young charming Fortunatus—struck me almost at once. But I could not help it. Afterwards I found that nearly every one else shares this feeling.

Of course exactly the same thing is operative on the screen. For Chaplin owes his supremacy as much to the tears as to the laughter of the multitude.

This pathos of his comes from an enduring isolation. He is, and I think always will be, a lonely figure. Beloved by many, applauded by all, he is merely with—never of—the crowd—not though he gives it back gesture for gesture and laugh for laugh. Not misleading, the look of listening which so much impressed me the first time I met him! For early in life Chaplin took his seat in the parquet of life and ever since he has been watching the rest of us actors unfolding our drama. Do not be deceived because sometimes he vaults over the footlights and behaves just like the performers. Even when he is at his merriest pranks, even when he is talking most confidentially and affectionately to his friends, he is still the onlooker, detached from the rest of us by I know not what fastnesses of spirit.

The most intimate of Charlie's friends in Holly-

wood are Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. He goes over to their house frequently, and the three talk pictures hard and fast. Chaplin, of course, frequently sees in the creations of the other two an opportunity for characteristic suggestions.

When, for instance, he saw the moated castle in "Robin Hood" he said to Fairbanks: "Wonderful, Doug! Just think what I would do with that drawbridge on Sunday morning! I'd let it down so I could take in the Sunday papers and the milk-bottles and then draw it up tight so that nobody could get at me all the rest of the day."

One time I asked Charlie who was his favourite screen actress. "I think Mary Pickford," he answered unhestitatingly. "You see there's a wonderful quality about her—it's that more than her acting."

Unlike almost every other screen actor, Charlie does not work from a script. When he starts a new story he is apt to come into his studio and say, "Build me a kitchen and a dining-room." He has at this moment perhaps only the germ of an idea. But day by day he develops it, and as he does so his scenario writer puts down each scene. This method has often been described, and I touch upon it here only for its value in revealing his psychology. A scenario would undoubtedly irk him as much as would a social engagement. Always, always,

Chaplin must be assured that he is free, that his individuality has scope for its spontaneous play.

His emotionality is never more apparent than when he is at work. Often he becomes exhausted in his efforts to inspire one of his company with the desired emotion. "Heavens!" he will cry, "It's enough to break your heart—such stupidity!" When he sees the rushes, anger and despair are apt to break from their leashes and run away with the projection-room. Often, however, these emotions are directed quite as much toward his own part in the performance as toward that of others. Charlie has, in fact, that capacity for being dissatisfied with his own work which is a part of every great artist.

The world at large does not seem to know much about Charlie's brother Sydney. Yet he is a very real brother and Charlie has a very real affection for him. He himself is an excellent comedian with only one disadvantage—he is the near relative of a great comedian. This relationship, I may add, could never be detected from a casual glance at the two, for Syd Chaplin is rather tall and rather blond and his features are much more sharply cut than are those of his brother.

Syd, by the way, possesses a very ready wit. Once when dining with Mary and Doug he listened to the latter's statement that the costumes for

"Robin Hood" had cost a hundred and sixty-two thousand dollars.

"Hmph!" commented Syd, "I should call that 'Robbin' Doug.' "

It was after completing his $670,000 contract with the Mutual Film Company that Charlie made with the First National Company a million-dollar deal calling for eight two-reel pictures. This did not sound difficult. The comedian expected to complete the order in a year. Instead, he has only just recently finished the last of the National Film pictures.

Chapter Fourteen

JACKIE COOGAN AND "THE KID"

THE few superfluities which appeal to Charlie Chaplin must have some association of romance. For example, he is very fond of mangoes, and every evening that a certain Los Angeles café has this delicacy the manager calls up Chaplin's house. When Charlie sits down in front of a glass of this exotic fruit he is positively radiant.

"Lovely musty odor!" he will comment. To him the delicacy calls up visions of long-robed, wide-sleeved Eastern men, of caravans winding thread-like across the desert, and of incense rising in fretted temples from the feet of golden gods. Every bit of him goes out to meet this glamourous suggestion just exactly as every bit of him goes out to meet the broad, rollicking humor of the derby pulled off by the string.

Domesticity does not fit into my conception of his character. He is too individual, too much oppressed by threat of routine, to sustain any such close relationship. One can as easily imagine De

Musset or Verlaine mowing the front lawn of his suburban home as Chaplin responding contentedly to like conditions.

My association of his name with these two great French poets is not accidental. For Chaplin is not a mere comedian. He is a poet—the great poet of the screen. His fierce rebellions against man-made fetters which would trammel the individual soul in its progress toward complete expression, his sensitiveness to impression, his strange combinatnon of emotionality and complete detachment—these ally him in spirit with the youngest and fieriest of bards. Surely, too, his professional achievement is consistent with this spirit. For Chaplin has brought from the borderland of the subconscious mind those emotions which he sets before you. In that single small figure with the baggy trousers and the flopping shoes he reveals the loneliness and frailty, the lurking irresponsibility, the fears and aspirations—all the intermingled pathos and humour of the universal soul.

"Shoulder Arms," for example. Here Chaplin bears for you the real Everyman at war. Stripped of his bombast and fine speeches, of the brave front which he presents to his fellows, the soldier stands stark before you. It is a poet's realisation of those things buried beneath the surface of garb and man-

ner and every-day speech, and it is all of a poet's concrete expression of them.

One evening while I was dining with Chaplin in Los Angeles a very smartly dressed woman leading a small boy by the hand entered the restaurant. The moment that the latter caught sight of the comedian he rushed over to him and threw his arms about Chaplin's neck. There was a look of rapture in the big brown eyes which I have never forgotten.

After the enthusiasm of this greeting had ebbed away Charlie introduced the pair. It was Jackie Coogan and his mother. When they had moved on from our table Chaplin turned to me.

"There's a boy you ought to have," he commented. "He's a great actor."

Possibly Chaplin never shone more brightly in any human relationship than he has in his association with Jackie Coogan. The tremendous love and tenderness which he expressed for "The Kid" on the screen had, in fact, a source of actual feeling. He really loved and does love this small boy. As to the latter, I have already indicated in my account of his greeting how touchingly Jackie returns this affection.

If you ask the tiny star to-day who is his best friend his answer is prompt: "Charlie Chaplin." Equally loyal is the professional sting he gives to

his friend. One day somebody asked him who was the greatest living actor.

"Charlie Chaplin, of course," he retorted.

"And who is the second greatest?" persisted his interviewer.

"Jackie Coogan," he answered with all the serenity of the critical mind that is unshaken by any personal consideration.

"And the third?"

"Oh," said he, obviously somewhat impatient with the doggedness of this research, "I have told you the two greatest. What does it matter about the third?"

Even in that first casual greeting with this gifted boy I was struck by the perfect unconsciousness which sets Jackie apart from the ordinary stage child. He didn't seem to realise in the least that he was a famous personage, and I hear that it has been kept from him always—the enormity of his earnings, the fact that he, a lad not quite eight years old, has already earned almost a million dollars. Certainly that evening he was just a kid radiant at seeing the grown-up who had played games with him much more absorbedly than any other small boy could have done. Indeed, I have always been told in Hollywood by people who knew the Coogans well that he is first of all a real boy

possessing perhaps even more than the average boy's affinity with dirt.

Not long ago a friend of mine dropped in to see the small star. It was during the production of "Oliver Twist," and the set was pre-empted by some older members of the company. For a time Jackie, attired in blue overalls, listened to the director's voice and watched the rival talent. Then, going over to his father, he caught the other's hands and looked up appealingly into his face.

"Oh, Daddy," he pleaded, "I'm not getting any kick out of this. Mayn't I go outside and play?"

When this permission was granted Jackie availed himself of an opportunity to assemble his favourite playthings. These consist of a hammer, some old nails, and a plot of ground outside the studio. Here for half an hour the juvenile actor, who might recruit the most costly electrical toys—these have been showered upon him by people all over the world—squatted on the ground and hammered his beloved nails into stray pieces of wood.

While he was thus occupied the friend I have mentioned happened to refer to the gold chain she was wearing as looking like a royal decoration. "The Order of the Golden Fleece," she added laughingly to the group of older people watching with her over Jackie's recreation.

He stopped his hammering for an instant and

quickly, with a look of most eager intelligence, he lifted his eyes to her face.

"The Golden Fleece," he repeated. "Oh, I know all about that. It's what Jason sailed after."

I quote this to show the information already at the command of this astounding lad. All I have heard from Chaplin and from others convinces me, in fact, that his histrionic ability is accompanied by one of those childish minds which work in all directions, which positively have to be held back from learning too much.

One incident in connection with the production of "The Kid" throws into relief Chaplin's feeling for his small co-star. He was directing the child in a particularly affecting scene when suddenly he turned to Jackie's father.

"You direct him—I can't stand it!" he said, turning away quickly. The child's tears, even though histrionic ones, had been too much for the high-strung, emotional Chaplin.

Charlie's devotion to Jackie Coogan is explicable to me after one glimpse of the child. So, too, are the words of a certain woman I know. "There is something about that boy," says the latter, "that always makes me feel like crying. I don't know why, for he seems so gay and happy." I myself caught in an instant that same touching, even solemn, quality. What is it? Perhaps because in

those wide childish eyes one feels a wisdom brought from some other world and not yet dimmed by that of this.

I feel that I can not bring my recollections of Chaplin to a close at a point more deeply significant of his artist's nature than the account of my own preview of "The Kid." When he finished with this picture, attended as it was by his conflict with Mildred Harris, he was in an abysmal state.

"Sam," said he one day, "I wish when you have nothing else to do you'd come over to my studio and look at my new picture. I'd like to get your opinion of it—advice, too, if you have any to offer."

"What do you think of it?" I asked him.

"Rotten!" he answered. "I'm awfully discouraged over it."

I had heard such comments from him before on similar occasions, for by the time that he has finished a story he has so completely lost all sense of perspective that nobody can convince him that the production has one glimmering ray of merit. Consequently I attached no importance to this mood of his. Putting down his words to the divine discontent of genius, I went over that very day with Gouverneur Morris to see "The Kid."

Even my prejudice in favour of anything that Charlie does did not prepare me for this supreme manifestation of his artistry. Just as the world

was afterward to do, Morris and I laughed and cried and gasped as the wonderful story unrolled before us.

As for Charlie, he looked at us unbelievingly. He simply could not make himself understand that we were not feigning this appreciation.

"Charlie," I said after it was all over, "if you never had done or never should do another picture your name would go down into history as the creator of 'The Kid.' "

With that peculiarly eager, wistful expression of his he looked at me. "You really think it's good then?" he asked. "You're not just saying this to make me feel encouraged?"

"If you don't believe me," I answered, "I'll call in a few others to help convince you. I tell you," I added, "let me do something, won't you? Let me give a dinner over at my studio and then we'll show them 'The Kid.' "

Very reluctantly he agreed. I thereupon sent out invitations, and I don't suppose there was ever a more brilliant constellation of names represented at any Hollywood celebration than that afforded by this preview of "The Kid" at the Goldwyn Studio. Among authors we had Sir Gilbert Parker, Somerset Maugham, Elinor Glyn, Edward Knoblach, Mrs. Gertrude Atherton, Rupert Hughes, Rex Beach, and Rita Weiman. Among

JACKIE COOGAN

Now earning five hundred thousand dollars annually and not ten years old.

GEORGE FITZMAURICE

This most noted of artistic directors, guiding Wallace Reid (at piano) through a scene in "Peter Ibbetson."

the many famous personalities of the screen were Elsie Ferguson and Pauline Frederick. As this group began to concentrate upon the picture, Charlie, who had been intensely nervous throughout the course of the dinner, seemed stricken with terror.

I have attended many previews in my life, but never have I seen anything like the enthusiasm with which "The Kid" was greeted by these distinguished people of pen and screen and stage. Tears streamed down the faces of many of the women and some of the men. Shouts of laughter were interspersed with cries of applause. Yet still little Chaplin sitting here beside me, could not believe in the miracle of success.

"Do you really think they like it—are you sure it's going over?" he would whisper to me from time to time.

I doubt if he was convinced even after the performance when many of the women went up and threw their arms about him and when even the men forgot Anglo-Saxon reserve in their congratulations.

One amusing glint from this evening is struck by a word of Elinor Glyn's. During the course of the dinner she happened to tell us all that she had never in her life seen more than one picture. But when at the end of the evening a newspaper man

present asked Mrs. Glyn how she liked "The Kid" she answered with prompt soulfulness, "The finest picture I ever saw in my life."

I have no doubt that by this time she had persuaded herself of broad facilities of comparison.

Chapter Fifteen

DOUG AND MARY

AS I have already mentioned, Charlie's closest friends in the film colony are Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. Regarding the former of these two, I may say that I have never had the same opportunity to observe him professionally as that which favoured me in the case of his famous wife. It is natural, therefore, that I should think of him first as the adoring husband.

That he is very deeply in love with Mary no one who sees them together can doubt for an instant. Not by any means a self-effacing person, he is nevertheless always trying to turn the spotlight upon her and her achievements. Of the latter he is inordinately proud. It seems to me, in fact, that he is almost as much in love with Mary's pictures as he is with Mary herself.

I recall that once I attempted to talk to him about a certain picture of his. "You were splendid in that scene," I began.

"Glad you liked it," he interposed politely but

carelessly. And then, his eyes glowing at the approach of a really significant subject, he asked, "Have you seen Mary's new picture yet?"

I shook my head.

He looked at me almost reproachfully. "Oh, it's great—best thing she's ever done!"

Feebly I tried to turn back the conversation into its original channel. "You certainly were great in that scene with the——"

"Oh, yes, but Mary," he interrupted again; "my how that girl does know how! She has the sure instinct."

Et cetera, et cetera. Regarding his wife's superior talents, Fairbanks is as consistently uplifted as a wall-motto. He is no less sensible of those attributes of hers which are not directly connected with the screen.

"Mary has so much common sense, hasn't she?"—friends of the celebrated pair have heard Doug say this time and again.

As to Mary, I have already stated my certainty that Douglas Fairbanks represents the great romance of her life. To see her with him is to see Mary at her best. She never calls him "Doug"—indeed, I have an idea she doesn't much like to hear his name thus shorn by other people—and somehow into her utterance of that "Douglas" you find,

no matter how casual the speech, the way she really feels about him.

Mary Pickford, according to her most intimate friends, fell in love with Douglas Fairbanks the first time she saw him—fell in love in terms on which she had never known it. As years have gone by this first mad infatuation has been directed by real understanding, by the closeness of their professional interests—most of all by a solemn gratitude on her part for the care with which he so constantly surrounds her.

Only last October when Douglas and Mary came on to New York for the openings of their latest pictures I had dinner with the two.

"Mary," said I when for a moment Fairbanks left us together, "you're looking wonderful. It seems to me you are ten years younger than when I last saw you."

"Yes," replied she, "and it's all due to Douglas. He's as wonderful a husband as he is an actor. Always, always, his first thought is of me and you know what that means to me."

I did know. I remembered the gallant battling little figure of Famous Players days, of how she had always protected others—her mother and her family—and I was touched by the thought that now this great gift of protecting love was hers.

When I first met Mary she was married to Owen

Moore. Regarding this marriage, Mack Sennett has told me an interesting story.

"Mary and Moore were working together in the Biograph when Griffith and I were there," said he, "and I don't think they ever once thought of each other in any sentimental light—not until the rest of us put it into their heads. But you see it was this way: She was such a sweet-looking girl and he was such a sweet-looking boy—Owen Moore used to make you think of a kid whose mother had scrubbed his face and brushed his hair and got him all tidy for school—well, altogether they seemed to the rest of us so exactly suited that we got to teasing them about each other. We'd go up to Mary and say, 'Why don't you and Owen get more friendly?' and then we'd go after Moore in the same way about her."

It will be seen from this that Mary's first marriage was not a case of spontaneous combustion. It represents only a girl and boy fancy and that stimulated much after the fashion that brought Shakespeare's *Beatrice* and *Benedict* together.

One thing which always impressed me about this phase of Mary's life was that, no matter what the differences which severed Owen and her, she always spoke of him with great kindness and affection. With him it was the same. I never heard Owen Moore say anything of his former wife which was

not admiring. As to their differences, I have heard people say sometimes that all would have been well had it not been for Mrs. Pickford's determined efforts to keep them apart. Even though this original assumption were true, I do not share the conclusion. I do not even ascribe the break to certain temperamental defects of Moore's. To me it is explained by Sennett's story, showing, as it does, that the match came through the prompting of others rather than through any irresistible attraction.

Undoubtedly Mary's romance with Doug has been sustained by their solidarity of interest. He is as much immersed in pictures as she is. He has also the same capacity for hard and regular work. I heard several remark that when Doug and Mary got back from their famous visit to Europe he walked around the Fairbanks lot looking as happy as an American boy who has got back to baseball after a trying experience with musty churches and interminable art-galleries.

"Nothing like system—a regularised life!" he confided at intervals to those about him.

Socially Fairbanks is just as full of dash as he is on the screen. He is a delightful mimic. He talks well and he talks with great emphasis. Frequently he tosses off a phrase distinguished for verbal nicety or real wit. For it must be remembered that

Douglas Fairbanks brings to his profession a much greater educational and cultural equipment than the average screen performer.

Doug likes to surprise by his remarks. Occasionally when listening to him I have had the feeling that he was opening one of those paper favours—first the snap as he tears it apart and then the whimsical paper cap. For example, he once said, "Yes, 'The Three Musketeers' was all right, but there were two miscasts. One of them was *D'Artagnan.*"

Did he really mean it? Perhaps he did; perhaps he really thought, as he afterward explained, that *D'Artagnan* should have been a "thin, spidery little fellow." However, that one should have been in any doubt is sufficient comment. Indeed, it must be admitted even by one who has genuine respect for his big achievements and an equally genuine liking for his personality that Doug sometimes has the air of saying things for effect. Certainly he is more self-conscious, more mannered then is Mary Pickford.

To grasp the essence of Fairbanks it seems to me that you must think of "Sentimental Tommy." As he works out his gigantic historical films he is exactly like Barrie's boy hero playing with *Corp* and *Shadrach* in the den. There is no doubt about it. He thoroughly believes that he is in truth *Robin*

Hood or *D'Artagnan.* To him, therefore, work is one long engrossing game of make-believe; and if "Sentimental Tommy's" "methinks"—that one magical utterance which changed the entire atmosphere from the literal to the romantic—sometimes pursues Fairbanks to the drawing-room one can forgive this self-dramatisation to the man who has given us such unforgetable pictures of ages far removed from our own.

Chapter Sixteen

RODOLPH VALENTINO

WHEN in Hollywood about four years ago I learned to know by sight a young man who frequently stood around in the lobby of the Hotel Alexandria. He was very dark and slim, and his eyes had the sombreness of the Latin. I was especially struck by the grace of his walk and of his gestures. Even when he leaned up against a cigar-case he did it with a certain stateliness, and you felt that the column of some ruined temple overlooking the Mediterranean would have been much more appropriate than his present background.

Quite evidently he was looking for a job. In fact, before I was introduced to him I heard him approaching various people in the industry.

"Anything doing to-day?" "Have you finished casting So-and-So?" "When do you start shooting?" These questions, so familiar in the lobby of a Hollywood hotel, were made more touching in his case by a very naïve manner, by a slightly foreign accent. He always looked so eager when he put the

question and so disappointed when he got the answer.

Not long ago when I was in Hollywood I saw this same young man at a near-by seashore resort. On this day he was in a bathing-suit, and he was leading three police-dogs. The dogs were not a protective measure, but certainly the scene that day might have warranted some sort of guard. For as the young man walked out toward the waves, as the sun shone on his swarthy skin, the hundreds of women and girls who had come to Long Beach pressed onward for a more satisfactory glimpse of the bather. And as they did so an awed whisper passed through the feminine multitude.

"That's he—that's Valentino."

In all film history, replete as that is with instances of meteoric success, there has been nothing quite so swift as the rise of this young Italian pantomimist, Rodolph Valentino. The beginning of the breathless ascent may be traced to a reception given one afternoon by a certain Mr. Cole, a painter living in Hollywood. To this reception came Rex Ingram, then lately returned from overseas service in the Flying Corps. Came also in company with Paul Troubetsky, Rodolph Valentino. At this point I shall allow Mr. Ingram to tell the story just as he related it to me one evening last Summer

while we sat chatting on the porch of Mae Murray's and Bobby Leonard's home at Great Neck.

"I was attracted at once by Valentino's face and by his remarkable grace of movement," said Ingram, "and I made immediately a mental note of him. There's a fellow, thought I, who would be great in pictures, and if I get my job of directing back I'm going to use him. I was pretty confident then, you see, that this experiment was due for the very near future. Little did I think that months—yes, almost a year—would go by and find me just as idle as I was that day when I walked into Mr. Cole's reception.

"I wasn't remembering much about Valentino in those days, I can tell you. I was so poor that I had to hock all the civilian clothes I had left behind me in my storage-trunks. This left me nothing but my uniform, and the uniform proved, as it did to so many other ex-service men, anything but a talisman. The only effect it semed to produce was to prejudice any possible employer against me. At last—of course that's the way it always happens—I had two jobs offered to me at once. In the meantime, though, I had been obliged to give up my little two-dollar room. In fact, when I got my double offer I was owing two months' rent for it.

"The job I chose was with the —— No sooner had I started to work than I discovered Valentino

was on the same lot under Holubar. This second contact with the young foreigner deepened my confidence that he would be a great success on the silver-sheet, and when 'The Four Horsemen' came along I thought of him immediately.

"Of course it was obvious that he was the exact type for the young tango-dancer hero of the story. Even after I started work with him, though, I had no idea how far he'd go—not at the very first. But when we came to rehearsing the tango, "Rudy" did so well that I made up my mind to expand this phase of the story. I did this by means of a sequence in a Universal picture I had made several years before. The sequence showed an adventurous youth going into a Bowery dive and taking the dancer after he had first floored her partner. Bones and marrow, I transposed this action to South America—yet only a few of my wise Universal friends recognised it.

"This bit of acting not in the book gave Valentino a chance for one of his showiest pieces of work. I rehearsed it very carefully for three days right on the set, and I think the result showed it."

At this point in the director's story I asked him if he thought, as so many people do, that Valentino was a mere flash in the pan.

"By no means," rejoined he promptly; "he's very ambitious and earnest, and if he doesn't take what

the fans say too seriously he will live a long time as a picture idol—provided, of course, that he is kept in good stories and has a capable director."

Here at this point I can not refrain from quoting the most famous of directors on the subject of the present-day idol. In talking to Griffith one day I asked him what he thought of Valentino.

"I declare I don't know," replied he; "all the time I was looking at him in 'The Four Horsemen' I kept asking myself, 'Is this fellow really acting or is he so perfectly the type that he doesn't need to act?' "

The existing impression that this famous novel afforded Valentino his first part in pictures is erroneous. Not only had the young Latin worked with Holubar, as Ingram mentioned, but he had been cast with Mae Murray by Bobby Leonard. And, of course, he had rounded out his experience as an extra. Had it not been, however, for Rex Ingram and for the materialisation of a story so exactly adapted to his type, Valentino might still be standing around in the lobby of some Hollywood hotel—one of the thousands of young men and women whose hearts are suffocating with that one cry, "The chance! If only they'd give me the chance!"

"Hail, Czar of Hollywood!"—thus some woman addressed Charlie Chaplin not long ago.

"Oh, no," smiled Charlie, "that no longer. Val-

entino is the present ruler." And then he went on to say, "I like the fellow, you know. He's got a lot of colour and charm. I went around to see him the other day and it just delighted me to see him stepping about on his thick beautiful rugs among his gorgeous bric-à-brac and his incense-burners. They seemed to suit him, you know, and he was so pleased with all his new splendour—just like a child."

There is Chaplin for you—always delighted with the colourful, the pictorial, the thing which sets his imagination going.

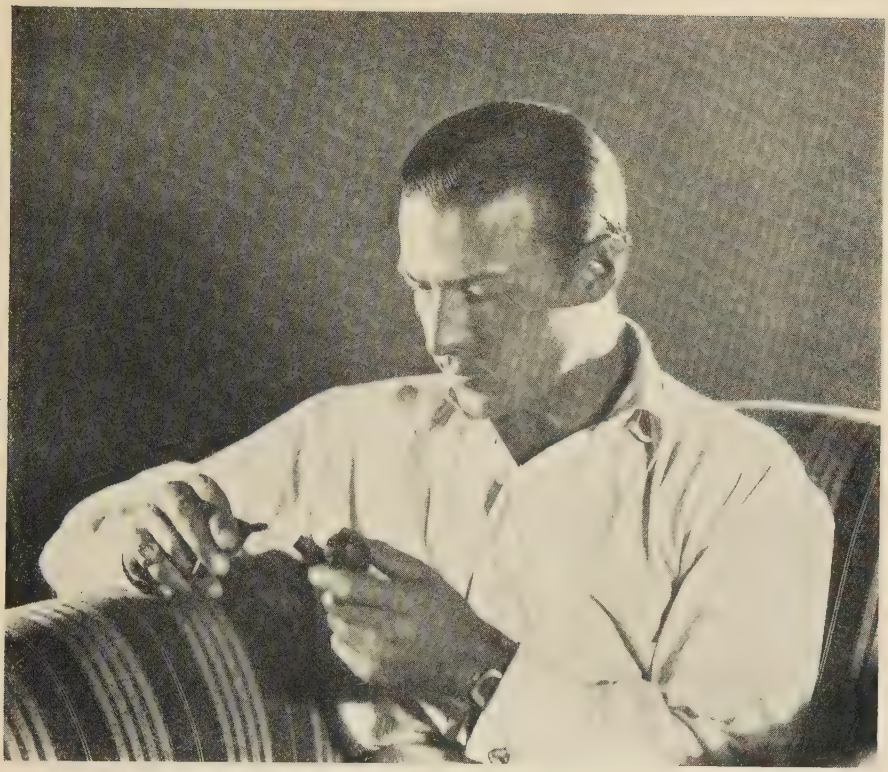
In line with Charlie's approval come the words of another man I know, a man well-read, cultured, and charming. "Any one who thinks Valentino is an illiterate young foreigner with a handsome face and a talent for dancing is mistaken"—so protests this witness. "I know him well and I am always interested in his comments on life and work. You've got to remember that 'Rudy' doesn't come from the lower classes in Italy. His father was a scientist and his family connections are with professional people."

"The Four Horsemen" carried not only Valentino high into the ether of popular success. Although Rex Ingram had made successful pictures before this, he had never so thoroughly demonstrated his capacity for that difficult union of finely

knit narrative and sweep of vision as did he in Ibañez's masterpiece. To my mind the skill with which the personal element is presented against the background of great epic disaster places Ingram in the very foremost rank of screen directors. As for Alice Terry, her rôle of the wife in the story afforded her the first satisfactory avenue for that exquisite something which differentiates her.

The story of Alice Terry has the same fairy-tale quality as Valentino's own. Like him, she had worked hard as an extra for many years, and the hard work had resulted in little recognition. However, discouraging as had been her experience, it was not without results. For Rex Ingram happened to see her in New York when, as a girl still in her mid-teens, she played with Bessie Barriscale in "Not My Little Sister." The promise which she gave impressed the young director almost immediately. When, indeed, he moved from New York to the Coast he welcomed the fact that she, too, had shifted from East to West. Had it not been for the War, in fact, Alice Terry would probably have been his leading lady some years before.

When Ingram on his return from overseas service finally located the job which put a roof once more over his head and civilian clothes again upon his back, he was to resume his slight acquaintance with Miss Terry. For she came to his office then



RUDOLPH VALENTINO

The most talked-of personality the screen has ever known.

MAURICE MAETERLINCK

Who journeyed from Paris to Hollywood for Mr. Goldwyn.

and applied for a position as script girl, the functionary who, working on the set, chalks off the scenes as they are made and notes the new ones extemporised.

He looked at her in amazement. "What," cried he, "you don't mean to say that you've given up acting, do you?"

She looked at him somewhat sadly. "Oh, dear, yes," she replied. "I did that some time ago. It was too discouraging—I wasn't getting any place, you see. No matter how hard I worked nothing seemed to come of it. And of course being an extra or getting some bit now and then doesn't keep you. So I decided I'd just get a regular job."

"And what have you been doing since?" inquired Ingram.

"I've been working in the cutting-room," replied she, "and that was fine—I mean it was fine—knowing just what you were going to get each week. But the ether commenced to get into my lungs and that's why I'm looking around for something else."

Ingram promised to give her the desired position in the picture following "Shore Acres." However, something changed his plans and instead he cast her for a wild and woolly Drury Lane melodrama called "Hearts Are Trumps." To his surprise she

seemed loath to accept this chance of returning to the screen.

"Oh, no, I don't want to try—I've given it all up, you see," she kept protesting in a way that showed how completely previous discouragements had shattered her self-confidence.

But he finally succeeded in overcoming her fears, and since then she has been his leading woman in every story except "Trifling Women." It was not, however, until the appearance of "The Four Horsemen" that Alice Terry, the girl who, heart-sick from her discouragements on the set, had wanted to retire to the comparative obscurity of script work, won the wide recognition which her beauty and her screen personality had so long deserved.

All this I have just related I heard from Miss Terry, now Mrs. Rex Ingram, on the same evening when Ingram told me of his experience with Valentino. On this same occasion she and her husband mentioned that her next appearance will be in John Russell's "Passion Vine." In this her support will be Ramon Navarro, another dancer from whom Ingram predicts a success which may even duplicate that of Valentino.

Anent both Valentino and Navarro, Ingram made an interesting observation. "A good dancer," said he, "frequently makes a good screen actor.

Why? Because he has both poise and repose, and I don't know any better start than these."

In this connection do not forget that Chaplin is one of the most graceful of dancers. Although not a professional, he might easily have become so.

Chapter Seventeen

ROMANTIC TRUE STORIES OF SOME SCREEN FAVORITES

ANOTHER film triumph won only after a long siege of the citadel is that of Von Strohein. Born of an old and distinguished Viennese family, the Baron von Stroheim was in another day one of those pictorial young officers who swaggered about the Ring Strasse, partook of café mélanges and fancifully whittled cakes at the smart confectioners' on the Graben, sunned themselves where the bands play "The Beautiful Blue Danube" and other Strauss waltzes—in brief, lent themselves to that atmosphere, at once sprightly and sentimental, which made the fascination of prewar Vienna. Perhaps he lent himself to it somewhat too thoroughly, for he always smiles when you ask him how he first happened to come to this country. And the smile seems to hint at some youthful escapade.

When he arrived in this country he had no more equipment for making his own livelihood than is suggested by this background of frivolity, of leisure, and of rigid caste etiquette. Yet he was penniless

now. Soda-fountain attendant and groom in a stable—these two jobs are only a few of the milestones passed in the wanderings of Von Stroheim from his hereditary environment. He was, in fact, almost starving when Griffith's war-pictures presented to him an opportunity. His Austrian uniform, his scars, his typical Teutonic appearance—all these were utilised in a screen presentation of the hated German officer.

After the vogue of the war-picture had passed, however, Von Stroheim found himself in a plight almost as bad as that from which these pictures had delivered him. No use to him now was the uniform, the scars, the typical Teutonic appearance! Quite the reverse. For days he would sit in those depressing anterooms which guard the presence of the great. I used to see him in the Goldwyn Studios and, remembering with admiration his work in the war-pictures, I wished only that the change in popular taste had not prohibited my employment of him in a characteristic rôle.

"I knew all the time that I had something in me which might be valuable to the screen," so he himself told a friend of mine in reference to this period, "but I couldn't get myself over. I lacked the American push. I took no for an answer far too easily, and so I might still be sitting around in dingy anterooms had not something happened to me. I

became deeply infatuated with a girl. But she said to me, 'No—not until I see if you can ever make good.' Then for the first time in my life I made up my mind to succeed."

The rest of his story is known by those who follow the history of screen celebrities. He had long been fired by an idea for the screen. Maddened by his inability to get an audience for this idea, the erstwhile Viennese aristocrat resolved upon forceful measures. He literally broke into Laemmle's room in a hotel, and with all the fire of desperation set forth his great ideas. The result was "Foolish Wives." This picture, notable—even notorious—among screen folk for the tremendous costliness of its production, is also set apart by the fact that Von Stroheim's activities in it were three-fold. He wrote the scenario, he directed it, and he took the leading part. His subsequent work shows the same correlation.

The first time I ever saw this picturesque figure away from the studio was at a café where he was the object of concentrated attention on the part of the other diners. Men glared at him; women whispered to each other, whispered as if an ogre had suddenly walked in upon the feast. "There's Von Stroheim —look at him; oh, isn't he too horrid!" I understood then why I had so often heard him called "the most hated man on the screen."

He must have been conscious of the antagonism of these strangers surrounding him, but if he was he gave no sign. Unconsciously as if the many hostile eyes had been directed toward some other person, he went on talking to the woman who was with him. Was he really insensitive or did he command his face to be a mask?

Afterward I heard that Von Stroheim is quite aware of the personal odium with which his professional characterisations of brutal German officer and villainous foreign aristocrat have surrounded him. Some say, indeed, that he cherishes this reputation, that not for worlds would he lift his finger to soften the hated impression. Yet as against this I have heard what Von Stroheim has said to his intimate friends.

"When Elliott Dexter goes into a café or some other public place," he once remarked, "people exclaimed delightedly. 'There he is—oh, isn't he charming!' But when I come in it's 'Ugh, there's Von Stroheim'; and if it's a man who notices me he's very likely to start off my name with a curse. I must say it hurts a little—in fact, it often makes me feel very disappointed in the American people —to think that they can be so childlike as to confuse me, Von Stroheim, the man, with Von Stroheim, the actor, to imagine that because I play the parts I do I must be that kind of a man."

Of course this confusion itself is a testimony to the excellence of his work, to that dramatic insight which had made numerous fellow professionals regard him as the most finished actor on the screen—with the exception of Chaplin, to whom, of course, because of the different character of their plays, he can scarcely be compared. As to his personal manner this has all the traditional grace of the cultured Continental. But there is more to Von Stroheim than the clicking of heels, the bows, the gestures, the precise phrasing with its slightly foreign accent, the air of attention which isolates the person to whom he is talking from all the world. There are many products of this mould, and, though over the American mind they usually exert the fascination of strangeness, such mannerisms do not explain the arresting quality of his personality. This lies in an expression which, both sad and gay, thoughtful and vivacious, reproduces the blend achieving the charm of his own Vienna.

Ex-nobleman and present film star! Surely no story on the screen could present greater contrasts of fortune than this story behind the screen. He himself is thoroughly conscious of it, and one day, sitting in his shirt-sleeves in his office, he remarked to some one I know, "Strange, strange, what America does for you! Do you know that if my old self, the Von Stroheim of Austria, were to have

met my present self, the Von Stroheim of Hollywood, he would have fought a duel with him? For I'm everything now that I was brought up to despise.

"When I was a young man at home I remember that one day at the dinner-table I unhooked the high collar of my uniform—just the top hook, you understand—because the day was so warm and the collar so tight. My stern old father glared at me across the table and then he sent me away from the room. 'Low-born,' 'vulgarian'—these were some of the words he hurled at me as I went out. And now, behold! I sit here without any collar and in my shirt-sleeves, and when I go home to-night I shall sit down to dinner without putting on either collar or coat. My wife doesn't mind—neither do I. There you are."

Because of his own struggles Von Stroheim is often exceedingly kind to those trying to get a foothold in the profession. Mae Busch, for example, speaks glowingly of Von Stroheim's helpfulness and says that it is to him she owes the chance which proved a turning-point in her career. The mention of Mae carries me to one of the most forceful examples of the fact that few screen careers are achieved without experiencing reverses.

In about the second year of the Lasky Company's existence, Mae Busch, a little Australian

girl with big hazel eyes fringed by incredibly long lashes, was acting in one of Lasky's vaudeville companies. For some reason or other she bolted the show in Los Angeles, and soon after this she made her first appearance in pictures as one of Mack Sennett's famous bathing girls. While she was in Sennett's organization she became involved in a drama of love and jealously and revenge which had nothing to do with screen performance. The situation, familiar to many of the Hollywood colony, resulted temporarily in her professional overthrow. A pathetic little figure, she wandered from studio to studio in search of work. Unable to find it, she finally married. Perhaps, as one of her friends has suggested, the marriage was the result of gratitude on her part to the man who did not let the world's desertion shake his love for her.

Be that as it may, the marriage proved disastrous, and for some years the pretty little Australian girl went down under the deep waters which have submerged so many others in the profession. Poor, unhappily married, the victim of several severe illnesses, who would have believed that Mae Busch would ever come back?

Those who found this belief difficult did not reckon with the mettle which is her distinguishing quality. One day she said to herself—this is the story as she tells it—"This has got to stop. Others

are getting away with it. Why not I?" This crystallisation brought her to Von Stroheim, who gave her a part in "Foolish Wives." Small as the part was, she made it stand out. Von Stroheim praised her work. So, too, did no less a person than Charlie Chaplin. The latter, in fact, promised her a big part in his next picture.

It was about the time when she had come to an agreement with Chaplin and the Goldwyn Company was absorbed in the problem of finding an ideal *Glory Quayle* for its production of "The Christian." This search is an answer to those who complain that the picture organisations are content with inferior dramatic talent and with types falling short of any real characterisation. We literally sifted the country for Hall Caine's heroine. Beautiful and near-beautiful, famous and obscure, East and West, young and middle-aged—all were represented in those four thousand women of whom we made tests.

Of course everybody in the industry had heard of our search, but it was not until the contest had been going on for some time that the idea of entering it occurred to Mae Busch. When she did finally come to the studio she has often said that it was with no expectation of being victorious. Nobody was more surprised that she herself when out of those four thousand applicants we chose her for *Glory Quayle!*

How did she do it! This is the way she herself tells of the experience: "When they told me I'd have to be a fourteen-year-old girl in one test I just almost swooned. Imagine me—after all I had been through—trying to look a kid like that. But I thought to myself, "Well, you're here now and you might as well stay by. So I put on the short dress and—funny!—I guess I was just in the mood for it—but when I stood in front of that camera I got to feeling just exactly the way I did when I was a youngster out in Australia. Of course," she adds quickly, "there was a great deal in this. I didn't really care whether I won out or not—I mean I wasn't all keyed up and nervous about it—for, you see, Charlie had promised me that part and so I didn't have everything at stake."

These last remarks draw attention to one of the acid experiences of the screen performer. No matter how often he or she has been subjected to these tryouts, the latest challenge always seems to make them feel as uneasy as the first. They become rigid with fear of what the new director may think of them and so, naturally, defeat the very results they so much desire.

In speaking of Mae Busch, Charlie Chaplin once said, "I always remember Mae at a party one evening when she suddenly thumped herself on the chest. 'It's here,' she said fiercely, 'something inside me—

something I've got to get out!' That impressed me a whole lot," added he, "for I haven't heard so awfully many screen actresses in my time complaining of any inner weight of talent oppressing them."

It was, of course, this real fire of histrionic energy which burned down every obstacle before it. That together with all the suffering she had undergone counts enormously in her work on the screen and removes her many degrees from the puppet types which have cast discredit upon the profession.

The moment you meet Mae you recognise her as "good copy." This is so because she is perfectly natural, and being natural with her means saying exactly what she thinks. She says it graphically, pungently, often slangily, so that almost every sentence she utters lingers in your mind as a vivid picture of some phase of experience. Far from being a highbrow herself, she is one of those vivid types in which the real highbrow delights.

Another screen performer who sailed a few choppy seas before coming into port is that delightful young comedian, Harold Lloyd. The first time I ever met Lloyd was at a dinner at which Chaplin was also present. The latter was talking on one of his favourite themes, religion or economics —I forget which—and his words, always clipped just enough to reveal his English birth, were com-

ing thick and fast. I noticed that as he spoke a rather tall, rather serious-looking young fellow, who was one of a group in an opposite corner of the room, was looking at him wonderingly, almost wistfully. He himself was not saying a word.

"Who is that chap over there?" I asked of the man next to me.

"Oh, don't you know him? That's Harold Lloyd, the comedian."

"Quiet fellow, isn't he?" I remarked. "I've hardly heard him say a word."

"He's usually like that at parties," replied the other man. "I've been around with that boy a lot and I've never once seen him cut up like Buster Keaton or Charlie Chaplin. He says he doesn't feel that way when he isn't on the set—that it isn't until he gets on the old horn-rimmed spectacles and the rest of the make-up that his comedy catches up with him."

"What sort of a chap is he, anyhow?" asked I a few moments later.

The answer was prompt and incisive. "The nicest, kindest, most wholesome, most sincere young fellow in Hollywood. Harold Lloyd—why, he's the sort of kid you'd just sit around and pray your daughter would marry!"

I hasten to say that there is nothing eccentric about the view of Lloyd just presented. All that

I have since heard of the brilliant young comedian corroborates this first glowing account. When later on, too, I came to have a long talk with him any vestige of the scepticism normally induced by such universal praise vanished.

When I had this talk there was no trace of the silent young man who had first aroused my curiosity. In fact the shyness which sometimes overwhelms him at a party disappears entirely in a tête-à-tête or in a small group of friendly spirits. Then he talks a great deal. He expresses himself well and every word has a drive, the drive of his tremendous earnestness.

Lloyd, I think, would make a poor subject for psychoanalysis. He seems to have no complexes. He probably never caught any colds in his subconscious. A fine balance is the outstanding effect of his whole personality.

He is very much interested in athletics. He is a fine amateur boxer, and I suppose he gets more fun out of his swimming-pool than out of almost any other possession of his. In this he presents a great contract to Chaplin, who doesn't care for Hollywood's "chilly pools" as he calls them.

If you go to Lloyd's studio you find almost everybody calling him "Speed." Even the youngsters on the lot make use of this nickname. These latter all seem to love him, and he is often followed

by such a troop that he resembles the Pied Piper of Hamelin.

There is a great deal of the old-fashioned gentleman about this lovable young fellow. He is so earnest about his work, so determined that he is going to do everything which will make him a better actor, so modest of his achievements, and then, too, he has all the old-fashioned reverences. Mother, country, religion—all the unities so often exposed nowadays to the critical mood—are accepted by Lloyd unquestioningly.

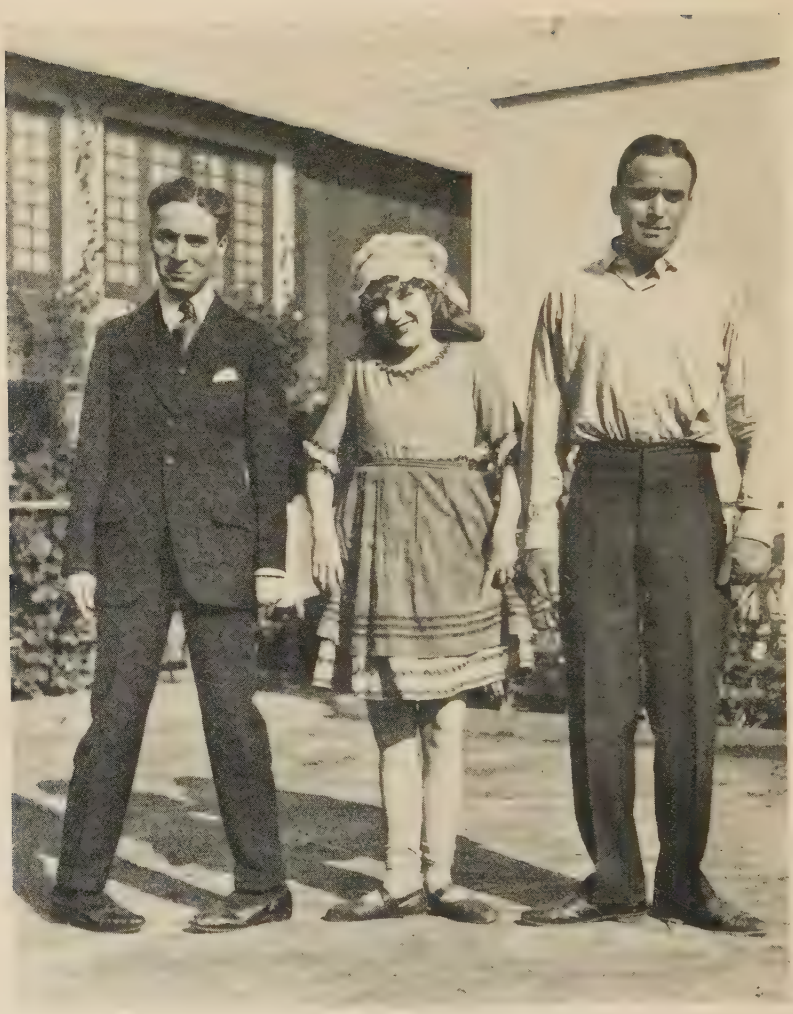
"I can't understand how any man could ever dissect his own mother's character," he once said in speaking of somebody who had engaged in this modern pastime. "After all—whatever she does, whatever her faults—she is your mother."

No rebel, not in the least degree introspective, Lloyd is essentially a thoughtful person. He has been made more so by the accident—an explosion in his studio—which so nearly cost him the loss of his sight. Nowadays when he loses his perspective he tells me that he often visits a hospital.

"I go into that grim white place," says he, "and I put myself back into those weeks and months when I lay with a bandage over my eyes, when everything that I had or wanted—youth and success and work—seemed to be vanishing, and I think I can see—what does anything else matter?"

ERIC VON STROHEIM

Who spent one million dollars on "Foolish Wives."
He is a prominent villain on the screen.



"CHARLIE," "DOUG" AND "MARY"

The famous trio at play after a strenuous day at the studio.

It is due to the old-fashioned gentleman in Lloyd that he will tolerate no suggestion of anything broad, anything Hogarthian in his comedy. One day one of his advisors came to him and said, "I've got it, Speed, a bit of business that will go over big!"

When he heard what it was Lloyd retorted promptly, "Not on your life! If I can't be funny and clean, too—why, then I'll decide to be just clean."

This year Lloyd tells me he expects to make about a million dollars. Yet it was not so many years ago when, according to his own amused word, his most cherished ambition was to be able to buy a silk shirt. His start toward this goal is as original as anything offered in the annals of motion-picture success.

When just a youngster out of high school Lloyd came to Hollywood with the intention of going into motion-pictures. Motion-pictures, however, seemed to have an equally firm intention of keeping him out. Every studio to which he applied turned him down, and finally he hit upon a unique "open sesame." Noticing that everybody who was in costume passed through the forbidden portals without challenge, Harold decided that there was nothing obligatory about a sack coat. So he got himself a costume, and from that time forth he has stayed on the inside.

While working as an extra in one of the studios he met another young extra named Hal Roach. After some time the two of them, with only several hundred dollars to sustain their resolution, decided to go into business for themselves.

"I wasn't any meteor, I can tell you that!" comments Harold in relating his experiences of these early days. "But we did succeed in selling a few pictures the first year. The next we sold more. Still, that limited success of ours did not seem to get me much nearer to the silk shirt. The fact of it is that we were terribly poor in those days, for every cent we made we put back into our pictures."

This indomitable desire to improve his films makes every one feel that even "Grandma's Boy," that story where his irresistible comedy is developed from the most vital psychological situation he has yet chosen, is merely a starting-point in the triumphs of characterisation that await him. Anent this picture of his, Lloyd told a friend of mine that the tribute to "Grandma's Boy" which he most appreciated came from Charlie Chaplin.

"Charlie wrote to me as soon as he saw it," he confided to this friend, "and what do you suppose he said? Why, that the story was an inspiration to him to do his own very best work, to be contented with nothing else for himself." And then, his dark eyes glowing with pleasure, he added,

"Just fancy what that meant to me—coming from Chaplin!"

Lloyd is an ardent admirer of Charlie's work. Also of his personality.

Harold Lloyd is to-day one of the five or six greatest drawing-cards of the screen box-office. From him I proceed logically to another name in this limited peerage—that of Norma Talmadge.

My introduction to the work of this, the greatest emotional actress of the films, came about in a way that was altogether personal and exceedingly sentimental.

One day I went up to the office of Joe Schenck, a theatrical man, who had been associated with Loew and Zukor in their earlier theatrical ventures, and whom I had known for some years. When I found him the first thing he did was to point out a velvet box on his desk. It was open, and inside curled a beautiful bracelet.

"Hmph!" exclaimed I, "what's all this?"

"It's a present," retorted he. "Do you know I'm engaged to be married?"

"Well, well!" answered I. "This is news. Who's the unfortunate lady?"

"Come around to the Rivoli to-night," he responded with a look brimming over its pride and happiness, "and I'll show you her work. Her name is Norma Talmadge."

Chapter Eighteen

POLA NEGRI

ONE of the most interesting experiences I had during a recent trip to California was my meeting with Pola Negri, the famous Polish star who was recently brought to this country by Famous-Players.

I was introduced to Miss Negri at a dinner given by Mr. and Mrs. Fitzmaurice. Practically every one of importance and reputation in the film colony, including Miss Negri and Charlin Chaplin was present.

It was on this occasion to which I had long looked forward that an amusing incident occurred that gave me an illuminating insight into her character.

During the course of the dinner Mrs. Fitzmaurice remarked:

"I saw some of your work in 'Bella Donna' today, Miss Negri. You looked very charming."

"I know I am charming," replied Pola. "I consider my work great, as I am a great artist."

She realises she is a true artist and a great one, and always lives up to this knowledge.

I was tremendously impressed with the beauty, ability, and intelligence of this gifted woman. She is one of the few motion picture stars who is well-read enough to discuss any subject intelligently. She typifies in real life, everything she seemed to be in "Passion" and "Gypsy Love," the two European-made pictures that served to introduce her to the American public and pave the way for her American debut.

It was probably this superior intelligence plus an unusual experience and training under Max Reinhardt, Ernest Lubitsch, and other continental theatrical geniuses that influenced Ben Blumenthal, an American friend of mine, to offer her a salary over 200,000 dollars a year to make pictures for him. He told me that when she started with him in Berlin she was earning 2000 marks.

I was very much interested to hear that she came to Berlin from Warsaw, where she had been both a dramatic actress and a motion-picture star.

It was this same American friend of mine who was responsible for her American trip, which was carefully planned and press agented by one of the most elaborate campaigns ever conducted for any one star.

Amusing little anecdotes told me by John Flinn, a special representative of Famous-Players who was delegated to accompany her on the trip from

New York to California, serve to show her tremendous sincerity as well as interesting side-lights on her character.

One of the most amusing of these stories relates the attempts of Miss Negri to teach her maid Lena, in the astute spending of the strange American coins, which had proved very puzzling to both maid and mistress.

Miss Negri finally sketched each coin from the five cent piece to the silver dollar, placing opposite each silver piece its equivalent in German money.

The first morning on the train, Mr. Flinn told me, the star gave Lena a five dollar bill to pay for her breakfast. Lena came back triumphantly with the breakfast, but no change. When asked what had happened to the three dollars and forty-five cents change, the maid replied with great pride that she had given it to the waiter as a tip.

An amusing sequel to this story happened in the hotel at Los Angeles at the time of Miss Negri's arrival.

As she was busy with photographers and newspaper interviewers, Lena attended to the placing of the trunks.

When Pola reached her suite and smiled on the assembled porters, she was greeted with frowns.

"Did you teep them?" she inquired of Lena, having learned enough about America by this time to

interpret the bad humour of the porters correctly.

Lena nodded emphatically.

"What you geev them?" inquired her mistress.

"The piece with the cow on," replied Lena.

Hastily consulting her chart Pola discovered to her chagrin that the maid had given the porters each a Buffalo nickel. It took but a moment to change the frowns to smiles with a different kind of gratuity.

Miss Negri was anxious to come to America, because it seemed to her, like to every other foreigner, to be the Land of Promise. Also, America was the place where she would again see Charlie Chaplin.

Her first meeting with Chaplin has always interested me. It happened during Charlie's last European trip, over a year ago. He had arrived in Germany one afternoon, and at dinner time had gone to the Palais Heinroth to dine. No one recognised him at first, until Al Kaufman, an American film executive came in with a large party given in honour of Pola Negri. Chaplin was invited to join them, introduced to Pola, and given a seat by her side.

He could speak no German, she no English. In spite of this difficulty it was plain to see that a mutual admiration sprang up between them. That night they met again at a friend's.

Mr. Blumenthal, knowing he was to take Miss Negri to America, arranged to have photographers take pictures of Charlie and Pola. This created a sensation in the hotel, where the pictures were taken.

A large crowd gathered to watch the farewell outside the hotel, for Charlie was leaving the city that day.

As "Good-byes" were being said, Mr. Blumenthal said to Pola, "Give Charlie a kiss."

And Pola did, while the cameras clicked, and a dozen or more impressions were made.

"Good-bye until we meet in Los Angeles," she said.

The following week this incident was featured in a London paper as "Chaplin's welcome in Germany."

It was apparent in the ensuing days that the impression Charlie made on her was not a fleeting one. Her mind was already set on seeing him again. It was plain that she thought of him always, and part of her eagerness to reach America was due to this interest.

Therefore, it is not at all unusual that this interest should develop into a beautiful romance when she met him again in California.

I saw these artists together a great deal during my visit there. In fact they are inseparable.

A great many people have asked me if I think they will marry. Judging the depths of a woman's feelings and her intentions from the way she acts, which of course, is not an easy thing to do, I believe Miss Negri intends to marry Charlie.

While Chaplin does not admit he is in love, I have never seen a man so devoted to a woman as he is to Pola. In fact I think she is the one woman who has ever interested him completely. Stories are circulated to the effect that Miss Negri announces her engagement to Chaplin in the morning papers and Charlie denies it in the evening papers and vice versa. I know these are not authenticated or authorized by either of them, for they are both sincere.

Both are great artists, and therefore misunderstandings are bound to happen. Whatever I am asked about the combination I say it is a great one, but that there exists perhaps a little too much temperament.

At the present moment, however, Miss Negri's career is occupying her most vital thoughts. I believe that she, like every great artist, puts her career before her personal desires, no matter how strong they may be. She is working to establish her American reputation as she established her European one, with a thoroughness and intensity coupled with tireless energy and indefatigable

attention that makes her an extremist in everything.

I learned at the studio that if she has music to work with she will be satisfied with nothing less than ceaseless playing of funeral dirges throughout the entire day. She is known to make twice as many scenes each day as is normally required. Her first day at Famous-Players studio was a record breaker. She made thirty-nine scenes, whereas twelve scenes are considered a good day's work. She not only learns her own rôle, but the rôles of all the others acting in the picture with her.

She objects strongly to visitors being brought to the "set" where she is working. It interferes with her mood, she declares, and she is right. The making of moving-pictures is a business, just as the making of steel, or the growing of flowers, or the sculping of a great statue, and there is no reason for it being made a curiosity shop.

If she studies fashions, she studies them with this same indefatigable zeal that marks her every effort. She has every fashion magazine published in Europe and America, and pores over them for hours. She is an incurable enthusiast in everything she does.

There is probably no other woman in pictures today who is endowed with more of the basic elements required to make a great dramatic actress than Pola Negri.

Chapter Nineteen

THE TWO TALMADGES

I ACCOMPANIED Schenck to the Rivoli to see his fiancée on the screen, and I was very forcibly struck with the beauty and talent of Miss Norma Talmadge.

"Very lovely—very gifted," was my verdict as we left the theatre.

"Isn't she, though?" he responded eagerly. "I tell you that girl is bound to go far." He hesitated for a moment, and then turning toward me abruptly he asked, "How about it, Sam? Wouldn't you like to have her for your company? She'd come with you for a thousand a week."

I shook my head. "I'm sorry, Joe," I replied, "but you know what the situation is. It's the big name that counts nowadays, and Miss Talmadge, beautiful and talented as she is, hasn't enough fame for a man trying to put over a new company. But why don't you try Zukor? He's better established and could afford to take a chance."

"No," answered he, "I might as well tell you that he's turned her down already."

This dialogue was destined to be an illuminating comment upon both my competitor and myself. In refusing to heed the knock of opportunity we both lost many thousands of dollars. Indeed, I might as well admit here, in these annals of a life so crowded with errors of judgment, that in my case Opportunity was lenient. Once again, a year or so after this episode, she again knocked at my door. And once again I was deaf to the golden visitor.

On this second occasion Schenck, who had in the meanwhile married Miss Talmadge, came to me with a proposition.

"Sam," announced he, "I've started producing Norma's pictures and of course I realise that I'm not so awfully experienced. Now, what I want to know is this: Won't you let her work over in your studio and get the benefit of your advice? If you do I'll give you twenty-five per cent. of the receipts of her pictures."

I hesitated for a moment and then I told him I didn't see my way clear to any such arrangement. I was too busy, I explained, to give her the attention meriting any such returns. Nowadays in looking down the long road over which I have come I often pause at this point. For I realise to-day that had I accepted this offer I should have made enough to balance many costly experiments.

The realisation of my blunder came to me not

long afterward when I was dining with Schenck at his home. After dinner we sat talking together in the living-room, and it must have been almost midnight when the door was flung open and Miss Talmadge stood before us. Her eyes were shining with excitement; the cheeks above the full collar of her gorgeous evening wrap were the color of a Jacqueminot rose. Never in all my life have I seen a more vivid apparition of beautiful, victorious youth.

There was only a second for me to record that impression, for Miss Talmadge just hesitated there on the threshold, and then with a tumultuous gesture she threw herself into her husband's arms.

"Oh, Daddy," she cried, clinging to him and looking up into his eyes, "I could hardly wait until I got home to tell you! They all said I drew bigger crowds than Clara Kimball Young. Think of it! Oh, isn't it just too wonderful! I'm the happiest girl in the world."

I had heard from Joe previously that his wife was making personal appearances that evening at the Loew theatres; but I was certainly as unprepared for the result as was the heroine of the incident herself. For in those days the beautiful Clara Kimball Young was one of the most popular women on the screen, and the announcement that she was going to make a personal appearance at any

New York theatre was almost equivalent to calling out the police reserves.

But, struck as I was by the professional significance of her speech, I was even more impressed by its personal bearing. It was so evident—Miss Talmadge's eagerness to share any triumph with her husband—she was so exactly like a child returning to its home with the ten gilt stars won from her recitations in geography or history—that all later memories of her are overshadowed by this one touching revelation of the real Norma Talmadge.

To understand the woman whose glowing attitudes have so enriched screen art you must think of her, not as a single figure, but as part of a pattern. True, her career is the most brilliant thread in this tapestry, but it is dependent for its brilliance and effect upon the somewhat less glittering but equally firm threads of its background and intermingling figures. The fabric of which I speak is family life. This includes not only Miss Talmadge's husband, but her mother and two sisters. They would appear as a unit in any field of endeavour, but, as it happens, pictures have supplied the hand weaving them into their fixed and arresting design.

As a very young child, so Schenck has told me, Norma displayed her histrionic gifts. The talent was promptly encouraged by her mother, and it

was undoubtedly due to Mrs. Talmadge's influence that her eldest daughter entered the employ of the old Vitagraph Company. Unlike many others whose names have added lustre to the screen, Miss Talmadge was never an extra performer. At the very first she was given a small part. Yet at this time she was a girl in her early teens. Young as she was, however, she contrived to have a sister even younger. This sister, Constance, used to come to the studio with her almost every day and, wide-eyed over the importance of her more mature relative, would fasten Norma's frock and help her put on her make-up. At last this career of self-effacement was rewarded by a chance for more individual enterprise. Constance became an extra in the Vitagraph studios.

On the part of neither Norma nor Constance is there any effort to suppress these humble days from the stranger's consciousness. Quite the contrary. Once they were dining at the Ritz with a friend of mine who has decidedly less command of this world's resources than have the Talmadge girls.

"Oh, how wonderful!" exclaimed this friend. "Think of being able to order like you, Norma—without ever looking at the expense side of the menu!"

Miss Talmadge laughed merrily. "Well," she retorted, "it hasn't always been like this, has it,

Constance? Remember the old Vitagraph days when we always had to eat inside a quarter? It wasn't a question with us of soup to nuts, but of soup or nuts."

I happened to be at a dance several years ago which was attended by both the sisters. Norma Talmadge took that evening only several turns about the room. Constance, on the other hand, danced every number. I myself was lucky enough to benefit by this protracted exercise and as I did so I caught over Constance's shoulder the eyes of Norma following her sister's figure through the ebb and flow of dancers. The quality of that glance will always linger with me. Why, indeed, should it not? For here she was—young, beautiful, an idol of the screen—and she was surveying this sister only a few years younger with the fond, admiring glance which some dowager might bestow on one of the younger generation.

My interest was so piqued by this matter of the self-appointed wallflower that I asked a close friend of the Talmadges if this were a habitual attitude of Norma's.

"Oh, dear, yes!" replied she. "Norma's always like that. Very seldom do you find her dancing more than several times an evening. What she just loves is to think of Constance as the belle of the ball."

CONSTANCE TALMADGE

Dainty sister of Norma and Natalie and aunt of Buster Keaton's solemn-faced baby.

NORMA TALMADGE

In private life, Mrs. Joseph Schenck. A noted screen leader.

"And how about Natalie?" I asked.

"Indeed, yes. Norma and Constance are as devoted to her as they are to each other, and they all three unite in worshipping their mother.

"A close corporation," I commented. "Yet Buster Keaton and Joe Schenck seem to come in for almost as high dividends as the original stockholders."

"Of course," assented my informer, "a Talmadge-in-law is all right so long as he is also an in-picture. For you've got to remember that pictures are the leading interest of the whole family. In fact, I think that was largely the trouble between Constance and her husband. He was not only outside the profession, but I understand that he objected to Constance going on with her work on the screen."

I have been told by those who have worked with Miss Norma Talmadge on the set that, in contrast to her sister Constance, who is exceedingly even-tempered, she displays many of the characteristics popularly associated with a great emotional actress. Gusts of impatience followed immediately by the most radiant, sunshiny laughter; flurries of annoyance; ripples of amusement—these are the manifestations of a nature which, in the words of one admirer, is "as big and sweet as all outdoors." Thoroughly consistent with such a nature is Miss Talmadge's type of generosity. This functions

more conspicuously through some concrete human appeal than through official solicitation. Testimony to this is offered by a letter from Joe Schenck to a friend of mine.

The letter, written by Schenck while he and Miss Talmadge were on a recent visit to Germany, records how Norma was followed by a beggar in the streets of Berlin. Old and emaciated and dirty, he fell on his knees before the radiant young American and begged her for help. Miss Talmadge thereupon emptied the entire contents of her purse into his hands. "It was a nice little gift," commented Miss Talmadge in reporting the incident to her husband, "but it made me happy to do it, for I never saw a human being so grateful as he was."

"And how much did you happen to have in your bag?" questioned her husband.

"Oh, it was all of a thousand marks," answered she.

Her husband rocked with merriment. "And do you realize that you gave him all of twenty-five cents?" he said.

Miss Talmadge, so Schenck wrote, was aghast at this disclosure of her cramped style in benevolence. "And, pressed as she was for time," he concluded, "nothing would do but that she should go out early the next morning and hunt the fellow she had

wronged by her twenty-five-cent donation. When she did find him—believe me, he got something real."

From a being so swayed by the claim of the moment—a being, too, so young and beautiful—you would predict perhaps a less stable domestic situation. Mr. Schenck, one of the finest men I have ever known is some years older than his wife and, in addition to this, he is what is known as a practical type. Yet Miss Talmadge's devotion to him is one of the salients in her life. The evening when she could hardly wait to tell him of her triumph over Clara Kimball Young is, indeed, indicative of her whole attitude. Everything, both in pictures and out, is talked over with Mr. Schenck, and her manner when she is with him reflects always that deep content which an emotional nature feels often in stability.

Yet Mr. Schenck represents much more than a mooring for this brilliant personality. Remembering his efforts in her professional behalf from the moment when he so proudly showed me that bracelet on his office desk; acquainted, too, with the absolute devotion which he has subsequently given to her career, I often wonder how it would have fared with Miss Talmadge had this element in her life been lacking. Certainly she would have risen by sheer force of her talent and her beauty and her

enthusiasm without any such concentrated interest. But I very much doubt if her ascent would have been either so swift or so dazzling had this one great constructive force been absent.

Chapter Twenty

GOOD OLD WILL ROGERS

IT is a far cry from the greatest emotional actress of the films to one of the world's most infectious comedians. Yet I have set aside chronological considerations in order to save for last my recollections of a man whose comedy touches brightened the Goldwyn lot almost as much as they did the Goldwyn screen.

It was Rex Beach and I who brought Will Rogers into pictures. After our approach he confided to us that he had been somewhat mystified by the delayed recognition of his talents on the part of the picture world.

"I used to think it was funny," said he in his own inimitable way. "Here motion-pictures were booming along. They were getting in trained dogs and trained cats and grand-opera singers and everybody in the world but me. I couldn't make it out, and now after all these years you fellows have come to."

Rogers still loves to dwell on these fictitious pangs of a slighted talent, and he always adds,

"Well, there was a movement on foot for making fewer and worse pictures and so they hired me."

Certainly if his coming into picture activities was the result of any such urge, we were woefully misled. For his "Jubilo" was one of the best pictures ever produced by the Goldwyn Company.

Around his selection for the chief character of this story Will weaves one of his choicest monologues. "Sam had bought a tramp story," he relates, "and he was looking around the lot one day for somebody who could play the tramp. Well, he happened to see me in my street clothes and he said, 'There is the very fellow to play the tramp!' "Of course," he adds, "I love to play a tramp—you can act so natural and never have to dress for it."

Whether this story is historically correct or not it does bring out one of Will's claims to distinction in the Hollywood community. An old slouch hat pulled down over his eyes and some kind of nondescript trousers uncreased as a child's brow—this is his inveterate costume. Clad in this wise, he used to stand around the Goldwyn lawn and, surrounded by a crowd of cowboys and extras, would amuse himself by throwing the lariat at our "Keep off the Grass" signs.

The reader may imagine what a personality like this did for a studio somewhat overcharged with the artistic temperament. Temperament itself seemed

to find relief in those droll remarks with which Rogers meets almost every issue of the day. Numerous times I saw Miss Farrar and Miss Frederick talking with the comedian, and both gave every sign of an unshadowed enjoyment in his conversation. It was one of the two, I think, who asked Will one day whether he liked pictures as well as he did the stage.

"Oh, sure," drawled he with the unsmiling face which always makes his verbal twist the more irresistible. 'Why, up to the time I went into pictures I had never annoyed more than one audience at a time. This is the only business in the world where you can sit out front and applaud yourself. Now I was getting to that place on the stage where that feature appealed to me."

Incidentally, one of Rogers' most amusing memories of the stage implicates Miss Farrar. I shall let him sketch this with his own pungency of style. "I made one picture *Doubling for Romeo,*" he relates. "The reason we made it was that we could use the same costumes that Miss Geraldine Farrar and a friend of hers (at that time) had worn in some costume pictures—all these Shakespearian tights and everything. I don't say this egotistically, but I wore Geraldine's."

There may be those in the screen world who are overridden by emotions, who are played upon by

gusts of alternate personal attraction and repulsion. Not so Rogers. He is essentially a home man, and the first thing he did when he came to Hollywood was to invest the savings of years in a house for his family. This residence of Bill's is on Beverly Hills, and its location imposed upon its owner a heavy social responsibility.

"You know," I heard him telling somebody the other day, "my principal occupation in California is not making pictures—it is official guide. I live on the same hill as Uncle Doug and Aunt Mary—only I live much lower down the hill than they do—in fact, I live at the foot of the hill in a swamp. It's right at the forks of two streets, and all I do all day long is to tell tourists where Mary Pickford lives. I will be out in the yard going through my daily work—maybe licking my second kid—when some Iowa car will drive up and say, 'Can you tell us where Mary Pickford lives?' So I stand and point it out—just point and say, 'Mary Pickford lives right up there.'

"You want to know why I came back to the stage for a while—why, just to get a rest. I was so tired pointing. Now, I have played for every charity affair that was ever held in Los Angeles, and their people are very appreciative, so when I die they are going to give me a benefit and take the money and erect a statue of me with the arm pointing toward

Mary's and a sign on it, 'Mary Pickford lives right up there.' "

There is nothing waspish about Rogers's fun-making. Such a quality of humour as his implies, in fact, a true sense of life's values, a very wise and mellow spirit. Nothing shows this more clearly than a communication I received from him not very long ago.

"Dear Sam," it read, "when you first announced that you were going to write this book of memoirs I must say it didn't create much of a stir in movie circles till they learned what memoirs were. Then when they found it meant truths, everybody, including myself, commenced to get leery and wondered if you were going to remember *everything*. Now, I don't know what you are going to put into this catalogue of yours, but I do hope for the salvation of the Infant Industry you don't tell all—especially not what some of my pictures grossed.

"But if you've got to say something about me, say this—they were the two happiest years of my life that I spent on the old Goldwyn lot. We had some great troops there in those days—all of them good fellows. There was Miss Frederick, whom everybody that ever met her liked; Miss Madge Kennedy, than whom we have no sweeter character of stage or screen; Mabel Normand, the 'kidder' and good fellow, friend of every soul on earth,

whose quiet and not-seen charity has helped many a poor soul in need; Tom Moore, as good an Irishman as ever lived, and not stuck on his looks either.

"Also say this: I made in the two years I was on the lot twelve consecutive pictures—all with one director, Clarence Badger. That, I think, is a record—to be with the same director. And if there is anything worth while in any of them, it was certainly due to his efforts, as I am no actor. But he is patient, capable, and the finest man I ever met."

I have saved this communication because nothing else could reveal more forcibly the tolerance, the modesty, and the quick appreciation of anything good in us frail mortals which form the source of Will Rogers's ever-welling humour.

Chapter Twenty-one

SOME AUTHORS WHO HAVE TRAVELLED TO HOLLYWOOD

FROM previous chapters of mine it is evident that Mr. Emerson's suggestion about hitching your wagon to a star is fraught with certain dangers. I had harnessed the Goldwyn Company to that steed, and my ride had been anything but a smooth one. Is it any wonder, indeed, that after the various disappointments attending my exploitation of "big names," I began to distrust the wisdom of my course? Gradually there grow up within me a belief that the public was tiring of the star and a corresponding conviction that the emphasis of production should be placed upon the story rather than upon the player. In the poverty of screen drama lay, so I felt, the weakness of our industry, and the one correction of this weakness which suggested itself to me was a closer co-operation between author and picture-producer.

In 1919 this idea eventuated in an organization for which I must claim the virtue of absolute novelty. This organisation, under the name of "The Eminent Authors," included such popular Amer-

ican writers as Rex Beach, who assisted me in the development of my literary fusion; Mrs. Gertrude Atherton, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Rupert Hughes, Basil King, Gouverneur Morris, and Le Roy Scott. Under the terms of my contract with each individual of the group the author was to come to Hollywood to write in direct co-operation with the Goldwyn studios.

So great was the publicity attending this movement for the production of more inspired screen dramas that the Famous Players-Lasky Company followed our lead by organising a similar literary service. Whereas, however, we had been content with local talent, our competitors imported their authors from Europe. Elinor Glyn, Sir Gilbert Parker, Edward Knoblock, Arnold Bennett—these were the high spots in the rival camp. When you consider that Gene Stratton-Porter and Zane Grey had both been signed up by other California producers and that ultimately Kathleen Norris, Rita Weiman, and Somerset Maugham joined the cohorts of the pen, you will see why Hollywood was temporarily transformed from a picture colony to a picture-book colony.

Among all the literary names which have impressed Hollywood tradition that of Elinor Glyn is undoubtedly the most spectacular. One evening before dining at the Fairbanks home Douglas

took me out for a walk through his beautiful grounds. As we came to the famous swimming pool I caught sight of a woman seated on one of the stone benches and gazing pensively into the water. The evening sun caught in reddish hair—whether these tresses are a gift or an acquirement is often a theme of speculation—and in girlish folds of sea-green chiffon. And as the woman lifted her eyes I saw that these, too, were sea-green.

"That's Elinor Glyn," whispered Fairbanks; "she's dining with us to-night."

In a spirit of great curiosity I began my conversation with the Circe-looking woman to whom sun and pool and sea-green chiffon lent an atmosphere of which she herself was perhaps not altogether unconscious. She was exceedingly gracious and cordial, but as she talked I could not help making a few inward observations on her manner of speaking. She has the trick, so I found, of convincing you that her voice is some far-away, mysterious visitant of which she herself supplies only a humble and temporary instrument of escape.

For example, when she remarked, "Isn't this pool beautiful?" it sounded like some lonely Buddha's prayer echoing down through the ages from the far heights of Tibet.

After the dinner was over our host and hostess offered their customary method of release from "the

cares that infest the day." Pictures were turned on, and in this case the selection happened to be Mrs. Glyn's story, "Her Husband's Trademark," in which Gloria Swanson took the leading rôle. I can truthfully say that never in my life have I enjoyed any film so heartily. This was due, not to the character of the performance, but to the remarks which garnished its entire unfoldment.

"See that frock," whispered the author eagerly as, sitting beside me, she pointed to one of Gloria's creations; "I designed that gown."

Another second and she was calling attention to the finish of a certain setting. "Do you see that? An exact copy of my rooms in London. Do you suppose they would have known how to arrange a gentlewoman's rooms if it hadn't been for me?"

But there were other times when this robust major of self-congratulation shifted to a minor chord. "Ah, how terrible, how shocking!" I heard her moan several times. "All wrong, all wrong—they've ruined that scene. I might have known it. I was away that day, you see."

Verily that evening the "silent drama" renounced its salient characteristic!

Apropos of this incident, it may be interesting to learn that Mrs. Glyn took the greatest personal interest in Miss Swanson. True, her first comment upon this screen celebrity, a comment quoted up-

roariously by many of the picture colony, indicated that she found Gloria lacking in that subtlety which she considered essential for the portrayal of her heroines. If that comment was made and not merely attributed to the author, her later attitude to Miss Swanson would seem to reflect the joy of any creator in the challenge offered by apparent intractability of material. Be that as it may, I am informed that Mrs. Glyn started in with a right good-will upon the task of guiding the young actress in her literary taste, her clothes, her deportment, and her speech.

During that Summer when I first met Mrs. Glyn I had a house on the beach in California. Here I did a great deal of entertaining, and among these entertainments a dinner which I gave for Nina Wilcox Putnam represents the enthusiasm with which Hollywood took up the game of authors. For Elinor was only one of the many writers who mingled that evening with the luminaries of screen and stage. That she was not the most retiring of her craft is a statement bound to be accepted immediately by those familiar with her talent for being a dinner-guest. As a matter of fact, Mrs. Glyn is one of the greatest social assets I ever knew. Not only may she be relied upon always to wear the most exquisite of gowns, but her narratives and

her comments usually keep a whole roomful of people in an uproar of mirth.

That evening I discovered that she is an ardent believer in the transmigration of souls, and her theories regarding the former bodily tenements of some of the individuals present caused constant flurries of laughter. I think her psychic inquests began with Mrs. Kathleen Norris. For a long time she fixed upon this celebrated author a gaze which informed the rest of us how completely she had retired into realms where we could never follow her. Then abruptly, with the familiar effect of a voice which had journeyed far, far before it chose Elinor Glyn for its channel, she said:

"Now I know—centuries ago you were a man—strong, valiant, resolute. I see you leading your armies—bravely you led a forlorn hope. Perhaps at the last they turned against you—they stabbed you, who had brought them to the heights of victory."

We had hardly convalesced from this relevation of Mrs. Norris's masculine and unfortunate past when the psychic Boy Scout began to turn up old trails in Charlie Chaplin's consciousness.

"An old, old soul," she pronounced, emerging from the same sort of trance which had redeemed Mrs. Norris's former earthly abode from the mists of obscurity. "You—you were a princess. Thou-

SAMUEL GOLDWYN AND SEVEN FAMOUS AUTHORS HE WON TO THE SCREEN

Left to right standing: Leroy Scott, Gouverneur Morris, Samuel Goldwyn, Rupert Hughes. Sitting: Gertrude Atherton, Katharine Newlin Burt, Mary Roberts Rinehart, and Rita Weiman.

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

One of the noted authors won to the screen by Mr. Goldwyn.

sands of years ago you reigned over many in some far Eastern land. You loved the music played by your slaves on their stringed instruments, the soft scent of flowers brought to you by the winds, the moonlight as it fell on the oars of your galleys——"

Charlie may have had a number of similar tastes back in that remote incarnation of his, but I don't think they were brought to light. For the roars of merriment which greeted this presentment stilled the voice of the seer. To this laughter Charlie himself contributed most heartily. In fact, I don't believe any one ever laughed at Chaplin quite so hard as Chaplin laughed that evening at Elinor Glyn.

Regarding the introduction of these two an amusing story is current in California. It is reported that on this occasion Mrs. Glyn said to the comedian, "Dear, dear, so this is Charlie Chaplin! Do you know you don't look nearly so funny as I thought you would?" To this reassuring message Chaplin is said to have responded promptly, "Neither do you."

To go back to my dinner. After Mrs. Glyn had concluded her report upon previous abodes of the ego, our conversation drifted toward the profession engrossing our present incarnations. Pictures! The topic was started, I believe, by Miss Elsie Ferguson, who at that time was working with the

Famous Players-Lasky Company. To her announcement that she did not like her leading man of the moment, Mrs. Glyn turned a swiftly sympathetic ear.

"My dear," said she, "what do they know about soul, about art, about poetry? Blind, absolutely blind! The other day I took the loveliest young man to see them—he had the most beautiful eyes—but they didn't see it—they didn't appreciate it."

This verdict regarding my competitors' callousness to the finer issues of life is not to be taken too seriously. For Mrs. Glyn was then in the midst of that period of disillusionment which seems almost inevitable in the career of the author who tries to adapt his manuscripts to the screen. Out of the depths of my own experience I can speak of the friction which arises among author, producer, star, and director.

I thought that I had encountered some eminent difficulties before I organised the Eminent Authors; but when the Goldwyn Company introduced this literary faction in the fold, I was to look back on other days as being comparatively placid. This fact does not reflect upon the personalities of those writers whom we engaged. Socially, each one of them is a delightful being; but when the tradition of the pen ran athwart the tradition of the screen

I am bound to say that I suffered considerably from the impact.

The great trouble with the usual author is that he approaches the camera with some fixed literary ideal and he can not compromise with the motion-picture viewpoint. He does not realise that a page of Henry James prose, leading through the finest shades of human consciousness, is absolutely lost on the screen, a medium which demands first of all tangible drama, the elementary interaction between person and person or person and circumstance. This attitude brought many of the writers whom I had assembled into almost immediate conflict with our scenario department, and I was constantly being called upon to hear the tale of woe regarding some title that had been changed or some awfully important situation which had either been left out entirely or else altered in such a way as to ruin the literary conception.

Nor did this end the difficulty. For often the author and the star became hopelessly entangled in similar controversies. This latter situation is deftly suggested by Will Rogers when he says, "I was on the lot the last year of the reign of the Eminent Authors and, while I helped spoil none of their stories, I made various ones for the near-Eminents and lost the friendship of every living one of whose stories I made. So now," adds Will, "I have made

Washington Irving's *Ichabod Crane.* I am off all living authors' works—me for the dead ones!"

Undoubtedly the warfare which so frequently wages between star and author is to be attributed many times to the inflexibility and prejudice of the former. Thus I remember hearing Miss Rita Weiman tell of an interchange of thought between Nazimova and herself regarding the production of a certain story in which the one figured as author, the other as actress.

"I hope the time is coming," concluded Nazimova haughtily, "when the great actress may find great stories."

"Ah, yes," rejoined Miss Weiman, "I hope, too, the time is coming when the star may write her own stories."

In contrast to this attitude of the Russian actress is the humility which Norma Talmadge displayed in her interpretations of Benavente's "The Passion Flower." I have been told that everybody, including her husband and her director, advised against the screen preservation of the drama's tragic end. They urged upon her the fact that the picture audience demands a happy ending and that she would lose thousands of dollars by adhering to the story. By all such practical arguments she was absolutely unaffected.

"No," said she firmly, "this is the story of the

greatest living playwright. He knew what he wanted to say and who am I to spoil a great man's story?"

Among the writers whom the Goldwyn Company brought to Hollywood Rupert Hughes was notably successful. His story of "The Old Nest," grossed our organization nearly a million dollars, and since the production of this tale he has been actively engaged on our lot as both author and director. For both Mr. Hughes and his wife I feel a warmth of friendship quite independent of the profitableness of our business association, and some of the happiest hours of my life have been spent in their home. They, together with Mr. and Mrs. Rex Beach, represent two of my most valued associations.

Mr. Hughes's success in photoplays is to be ascribed to his prompt recognition of the gulf between those two channels of expression, literature and screen, and to his determination to master both the technicalities and spirit of the latter. In addition to this receptiveness of mind he has a capacity for work which I have never seen excelled. Many times I have known him to arrive in the studio early in the morning, direct all day, go home that evening to work on a scenario, and then, after perhaps a dinner or a dance, write several chapters of his new novel.

Mrs. Glyn showed much the same zeal in her

co-operation with the Famous Players-Lasky Company. Unlike numerous authors who have invaded Hollywood, she was not easily diverted from the set. So excessively did she superintend every detail of production that "Grips" and "Props" longed, so they say, for a more casual type of literary lady.

"She ain't a bit like them other authoreens we've had around here," one of the manual assistants is reported to have grieved. "They'll go off and leave you alone. But she—sure an' it's twelve times this day she's had me move that one bloody bureau in the set and still she ain't satisfied."

I have quoted Mrs. Glyn's remark anent the "beautiful young man" in whose behalf she had made such unavailing efforts with the Famous Players-Lasky Company. From all I have heard this story represented with her a habitual type of altruism. I am told that every now and then while she was working in the studio she would approach some good-looking chap whom perhaps she had never seen before.

"My dear boy," she was likely to address him, "you're really very charming, you know. Now I want you to take the leading part in my new story."

"Thank you, Mrs. Glyn," the other would falter, "but you see So-and-So is already cast for that part."

"Oh, what a shame!" would rejoin the author. "But surely you'll take the second part—in *my* play?"

Torn between pleasure at this avidity of interest and the pang inflicted upon any handsome actor by the supposition that he could possibly appear in a secondary rôle, the Adonis of the hour would then probably retreat to some lonely grotto where he could meditate upon the embarrassment of great beauty.

In one of the most amazing encounters of beauty and the author, the late Wallace Reid was cast for the leading part. Friends of Reid report that one day while he was coming off the set he was hailed by Mrs. Glyn.

"My dear boy"—thus she is said to have greeted him—"you're really very wonderful to look at. And, besides, you know you have—It."

"It?" Reid murmured confusedly, wondering perhaps what his press-agents and admirers could possible have overlooked. "What do you mean, Mrs. Glyn?"

"Oh, that is my word. It!" she repeated in that contralto voice which soughs through Mrs. Glyn like the lonely wind through the pine-trees. "Don't you see, that one syllable expresses everything—all the difference there is between people. You either have It or you haven't."

Reid was still considering himself in this new light of special privilege when he noticed that the writer's brows were puckered.

"Yes," he heard her reflect after a moment of such pained scrutiny, "you have It—but, ah, my dear boy—your boots and your hair! If I could only send you to my London bootmaker and have some one wise cut your hair!"

Although I do not vouch for the authenticity of this tale, I do say Mrs. Glyn's part in it is thoroughly consistent with several other incidents of which I have first-hand knowledge. Does she really mean such things or does she say them for effect? I myself believe that she plans her personality quite as carefully as she does her stories. When, for instance, arrayed in the most superb evening attire and accompanied by the handsomest man she has been able to find in the assemblage, Mrs. Glyn sweeps slowly through a ball-room; when she murmurs soulfully, "Orange, orange, how I love it! Often I sit in a room by myself and think orange. I fill my whole soul with its beautiful, warm rays—I drink them down into my heart—ah, orange!"—then she is showing her supreme ability, not only as the writer who can tell a popular tale, but as the writer who knows how to get herself constantly before the popular mind. I once said of her that

she was a great showman, and when she heard my comment she was exceedingly gratified.

But underneath all this pageantry of manner is a heart overflowing with the warmest interest in her fellow beings. One of the waitresses at the Hollywood Hotel, where Mrs. Glyn lived for some time, once said to me, "Of all the people I ever waited on Mrs. Glyn was the nicest and kindest and most considerate. I never knew her to be cross—not even at breakfast."

And, after all, the only trustworthy epitaph is composed by the person who serves us our breakfast.

It was after this flock of authors had alighted in Hollywood that M. Maurice Maeterlinck came to America. He brought with him the pretty little wife who had supplanted in his affections Mlle. Georgette le Blanc. Also, a lecture. Neither of these impedimenta prepossessed this country in his favour. Most Americans were ranged solidly with Mlle. le Blanc, abandoned at the peak of fame to which she had faithfully encouraged the Belgian author. As to his lecture, the delivery of this in English, a language of which M. Maeterlinck knew scarcely a word, still lives in the memory of many New Yorkers who went to pray and stayed to laugh.

In spite of the criticism attached to Maeterlinck's visit to the United States, there was so much publicity inherent in this criticism that I felt the Goldwyn Company might benefit through a professional association with the distinguished foreigner. So, arranging an interview through M. Maeterlinck's American manager, I had my first talk with the visiting author in the Goldwyn's Company's New York offices.

As he entered I was struck by the placidity of that rather large face. It was round and calm as a lake on a still August day. All our conversation was conducted through an interpreter, and in this manner I gathered that M. Maeterlinck viewed the cinema with enthusiasm and was confident that he would be able to convert his art to its uses.

"Very well, M. Maeterlinck," responded I, "I am anxious that we should procure exclusive rights to your works, and I am willing to make the same contract with you that I have previously made with Mary Roberts Rinehart."

The Belgian lifted his eyebrows in childlike bewilderment. It was quite evident that the name of our American novelist aroused no slumbering chord of memory.

"The same then as Gertrude Atherton's," I ventured.

This effort at impressiveness failed as ignobly as

my first. Indeed, mention of all the writers we had assembled called from him only that vacant smile, that politely groping gaze of a man being addressed in Choctaw or Sanskrit.

It is sad but it is true that the eminence of our Eminent Authors had never been detected by M. Maeterlinck. He had not heard of a single name on our list.

"Very well, then," I surrendered at last: "I mean I'll give you —— thousand dollars."

And then at last M. Maeterlinck's face beamed with intelligence. The dollar was one contemporary American author with the works of which he seemed thoroughly familiar. Indeed, I am compelled to record that invariably in all our subsequent intercourse the utterance of this word dollar acted very much as a pebble thrown upon that lake-like expanse of countenance. It created widening circles of comprehension and cheer.

Apart from the work which we hoped M. Maeterlinck might do for us, we featured him in a brilliant publicity scheme. We procured a special car for him and on this we sent him and his pretty little wife speeding to California. The verb used here is rather misleading. As a matter of fact, the lingering element in his journey was the essence of our calculation. For at every city and important town the special train stopped and the populace was

afforded a glimpse of the celebrated author. Needless to say, the advertising which we obtained through the news columns of papers in visited localities was quite overwhelming.

When M. Maeterlinck finally arrived at his destination his train of thought proved even more halting than the one which had brought him. From this latter, indeed, he never landed at all—not on the screen. His first attempt at camera material revolved about a small boy with blue feathers and, as I remember, a feather bed. While admitting the importance of "trifles light as air," the scenario department rejected this absolutely.

"Write us a love-story, Monsieur," suggested my associate, Mr. Lehr, "You see for some reason or other the fairy-story has never been popular on the screen."

Mr. Lehr's information, I may interpolate, is rooted in professional fact. The screen adaptation of M. Maeterlinck's most popular fairy-tale was, for example, not a success. As for financial returns it was certainly not the "blue bird for happiness."

The foreign author thereupon set himself to a less fanciful theme. This time he submitted a love-story, but alas! the type was anything but censor-proof. When we called his attention to this flaw he looked at us with a pained, bewildered, almost shocked expression.

"You ask me to write a love-story," he remonstrated, "and then you object because my hero or my heroine is married. Yet how can you write about love when you have no triangle?"

And I don't think we were ever quite successful in shaking him from this Continental orthodoxy. I dare say he will always think of two parallel lines as exceedingly provincial.

While he was in Hollywood M. Maeterlinck had a home with a tennis-court in the rear. To this court clings one of the most cherished memories of Hollywood, for on it frequently appeared Mme. Maeterlinck, and on Mme. Maeterlinck always appeared, not a skirt, but bloomers. She is a charming little dark thing, years younger than her husband, this Mme. Maeterlinck. The pair seemed always very happy together, but one day I heard something which opened up an inevitable vista before me. On that day the American manager of the foreign author came to Mr. Lehr and asked him if there was not some employment in the studio for Mme. Maeterlinck.

"Why, no," responded Mr. Lehr; "I can't think of a thing she would do."

"Not some little job?—it really doesn't matter how small," urged the other.

"But, my dear fellow, why should the wife of M. Maeterlinck be wanting any kind of a job?" ques-

tioned my associate, still untouched by this new plea for Belgian relief. "Her husband is far from poor, you know. Hasn't he an estate and investments abroad—those and all the royalties he is getting? Besides, of course, he have given him an advance on his contract with us."

The manager shrugged and then he smiled—a sapient smile. "To be sure. But madame—well, there are times perhaps when she longs for a little money of her own so she can snap her fingers at Monsieur."

This dialogue, taken in connection with other phases of my association with Maeterlinck, persuades me that this creator of reverent prose and mystic drama is afflicted with the same economic fixation—I borrow the term from psychoanalysis—which manifests itself so often among those whom some art has enriched. Screen stars and actresses, comedians and tragedians, singers and writers—often in thinking over those whom I have met I have been struck by the number who would be capable of instructing Benjamin Franklin in the ways of thrift.

I remember that once I asked a man who had long been associated with Ben Turpin, the widely known cross-eyed comedian, what sort of chap Turpin really was.

"Well," said he laughingly, "he's this sort of a

chap. He makes a lot of money and he keeps almost as much. He has an unpretentious little home manned with not more than one servant, and in the home there is a suite of parlour furniture. It's gilt, I think—anyway it's quite showy, and the Turpins are very much concerned over its welfare. They keep it covered up except when somebody calls, and even then they're not reckless. For they say that when the door-bell rings some one always peeps out of the window to see who is there. If it's a stranger, off come the furniture-coverings. But if it's a friend, the insurance is kept on."

This amusing story is always linked in my mind with the one which Will Rogers is fond of telling on Chaplin. "A girl went riding up in the Hollywood mountains," says he, "and was thrown and lost for two days. When it was thought they weren't going to find her, Charlie offered a reward of a thousand dollars in all the papers. It looked at that time, mind you, as if they weren't going to find her. But they did. So the people that found her offered five hundred of the thousand to anybody that would find Charlie."

For me one of the most amazing revelations regarding M. Maeterlinck concerns his indifference to music. It was in this country and while he was with the Goldwyn Company that he heard for the first time a rendition of the opera "Pelléas et Méli-

sande." One of my publicity men sat near him in his box at this performance, and he reported that from the large placid face those ethereal strains which Debussy wove about his own play drew not a sign of response. It was quite evident that the Belgian author perhaps considered Dr. Johnson somewhat too broad-minded when he said that music was a sound more agreeable than other noises.

When I was in England several years after the formation of the Goldwyn Company I made a memorable call upon another playwright whose pen moves in a different tempo from that of Maeterlinck. I had long been an admirer of Mr. Bernard Shaw and, in spite of the fact that the quality of his plays rather repudiates the suggestion of screen adaptation, I was interested in conducting the experiment.

Mr. and Mrs. Shaw entertained me at their London apartment with much brilliant talk and the inevitable tea. The playwright's wife, a very cordial hostess indeed, is one of those fresh-coloured, vigorous types of womanhood which you meet at every turn of Hyde Park. She was deeply engrosed that day in the Irish question, and her sympathies were brought into relief by a call from Sir Horace Plunkett, then just returned from a visit to the United States.

I recall that during the course of the talk Mrs.

Shaw told a story of an Irish lad sentenced to be hanged in the Tower for his revolutionary activities. Before his execution they came to him and promised that if he would give the authorities information regarding certain leaders in the movement his life would be spared. To this the lad, only about eighteen years of age, replied, "Gentlemen, you are wasting your time and mine."

Mrs. Shaw quoted this speech with great fire. "How," she concluded, "can you conquer a people with a spirit like that?"

When we drifted away from the Irish situation Mr. Shaw and I had a chance for a talk about motion-pictures. To my surprise I learned then that he was a picture enthusiast. He told me that there were two people whose films he never missed —Charlie Chaplin and Mary Pickford. Regarding the former, he was especially enthusiastic. I found, in fact, that he was as familiar with Chaplin's work as am I myself.

The affectionate courtesy displayed toward each other by the playwright and his wife is bound to impress any one familiar with some of Shaw's iconoclastic utterances upon the domestic situation. Certainly the atmosphere surprised me. The pair did not address each other as "Father" and "Mother," but, aside from this failure, they

seemed to be as tolerant and contented and settled as a hardware merchant of Topeka and his wife.

Toward the latter part of the afternoon I saw Mr. Shaw look frequently at his wrist-watch. Ultimately he mentioned that he was due to deliver a lecture that evening.

"And have you decided yet what you are going to speak about?" queried Mrs. Shaw when at last her husband rose to depart for this engagement.

"Not yet," he retorted; "I dare say I shall decide on the platform."

I always think of Mr. Shaw as he looked when he made this reply. His eyes, which are, I think, the clearest and most living blue I ever saw, so sparkled with merry perversity, his figure was so erect and spare and vigorous—there was so much spring in both face and physique—that he seemed to me—this man past middle age—the very embodiment of electric youth.

I suppose that he had that same expression of merry perversity when on the following day he told a newspaper reporter who called upon him to learn the outcome of his conversation with me, "Everything is all right. There is only one difference between Mr. Goldwyn and me. Whereas he is after art I am after money."

Whatever the explanation, Mr. Shaw never came to America, nor did he do any work for the

Goldwyn Company. I was no more fortunate in the result of my call upon Mr. H. G. Wells. He, like Mr. Shaw, had me at his home in London for tea. Here, however, the conversation focussed, not upon Ireland, but upon India, a direction determined by the fact that a young East-Indian was calling upon the author that afternoon.

The foreigner was very earnest in his expressions of admiration for Mr. Wells's "Outlines of History," and it was indeed a privilege to me, who had just read this presentment of history, to hear such first-hand comments by both the author and a representative of that mellow civilisation which Mr. Wells has compared so favourably with our Western achievements.

During the course of this conversation the Indian told the author that no other English writer held so high a place in his country as the one occupied by Mr. Wells. Although the latter must have spent many hours of his life in listening to similar tributes, he responded to it as gratefully as if this were a fresh experience.

When we came to talk of pictures I suggested to Mr. Wells that he visit California and write some stories for our company.

"Oh," said he, "I should like to come, for I know I should enjoy the California sunshine and meeting Charlie Chaplin. The only trouble with

me is that I never could write on order. I haven't been able to do it for magazines or publishers and I should certainly fail abjectly when it came to doing it for the screen."

I thereupon urged him to come to California as my guest, look over the situation. But, although I assured him that such a visit would leave him perfectly free to decide whether or not he cared to enter the picture lists, Mr. Wells did not accept my invitation.

As I left his home that day I remembered suddenly that twenty-five years before, I, who had just been entertained by the most celebrated of the younger English novelists, had wandered without home and without money through these very London streets. There was no self-congratulation in that swift contrast of present and future, but there was a deep wonder at the mysterious flux of life.

Another feeling dominated this wonder. It was my gratitude to the work which has so shaped and coloured my destiny. To motion-pictures I owe all the wide range of contacts which have made up to me for a boyhood handicapped by so many unfavourable circumstances. To it I owe also the greatest blessing which can befall any one of us—an impersonal interest so vivid and compelling that it survives any personal grief or maladjustment.

Almost every one who has been connected with picture-production understands the fascination which it exerts. I always think, indeed, of the answer which Charlie Chaplin once made to somebody who asked him what he most wanted from the future.

"More life," said Chaplin promptly. "Whether it comes through pictures or not—more life." And then he added half sadly, "Still I can't think of myself out of pictures. Whatever I do, I find myself wondering, 'Now, will that be good for my work or not?' "

Although, in comparison with this great creative artist, my own sphere is so humble, my understanding of this one dominating interest is sufficiently complete to justify me in applying his words to myself. Like Chaplin, I can not think of myself out of pictures. For to do that would be to turn my back on the far horizon which has always called me to it.

In the ten years since I entered that little Broadway motion-picture theatre with its static Western drama, its player-piano, and its far-flung peanut-shells, giant changes have taken place. Then film-production attracted few men and women of real intellectual capacity. To-day we see a former member of the United States Cabinet presiding

over its destinies. Then the motion-picture theatre was as sporadic as it was stunted and disfigured. To-day the smallest hamlet puts up its first motion-picture theatre at the same time that it erects its first church, and in the larger communities costly edifices have followed in the wake of the costly picture. Eight years ago the twenty thousand dollars which the Lasky Company expended upon "Carmen" was considered a vast sum. To-day the Goldwyn Company is investing nearly a million in its production of "Ben Hur."

With the development of our industry has come a corresponding development in the life of the country. Motion-pictures are, in truth, the magic travelling carpet on which those in the most remote village may fly to distant lands, to other ages, to realms of romance hitherto denied them. No other agency, not even the automobile, has combated so successfully the isolation of the rural communities. When I think of the glow which pictures have brought to so many lustreless lives all through the world, I am tempted, indeed, to overlook all the defects of the industry and to dwell only upon its perfections.

Yet defects there certainly are. Undoubtedly the ten years to come will do much to remove them. My own faith in the next decade is a firm one, and

to this new era of expansion I wish to dedicate whatever of ability, whatever of judgment I have gained from the experiences set down in these chapters.

THE END